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THE CLINIC OF A CLERIC

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE GIFT OF GOD

THE POTTER'S WHEEL

NO ROOM IN THE INN

THE CONQUERING LIFE

NOT BY EASTERN WINDOWS ONLY

THE CLINIC OF A CLERIC

BY

W. A. CAMERON

Minister of Yorkminster Church, Toronto



RAY LONG &
RICHARD R. SMITH, INC.
NEW YORK 1931

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY J. J. LITTLE & IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

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To
MY LOYAL FRIEND
HARRY L. STARK
FOR THIRTY YEARS THE
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE
YORKMINSTER SUNDAY SCHOOL,
TORONTO

Not in the clamour of the crowded street;
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng;
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat.

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I

CLINIC AND CONFESSIONAL

PRAYER

O God, our God, we thank Thee that Thou art light and that in Thee is no darkness at all. We have missed Thee at every turn because we have no sight for unseen things. We have no time to turn aside, and thus our hardened feet do not apprehend the holy ground. Our eyes are too earthbound to perceive that the heavens may declare Thy glory. Our ears are too deaf with inward strife to know that day unto day may utter speech. O Lord, that we might receive our hearing and our sight. Help us to turn aside that we may hear the mystic voice and know in ourselves that there is One who bears our burdens and rules for its ultimate redemption a world groaning and travailing in pain until now. Bring us into the hush of silenced passion and self-will and into the seclusion of spirit where Thou mayest be able to visit us and to build us up with power from on high. Lead us to the inner quiet in which some divine vision may be granted us. Illumine the unknown tracts of our natures, that hidden powers may come to light to be used in the service of Thy kingdom. May the sunshine of Thy love stir our hardened natures that they may blossom into fruitfulness for Thee.

Nor pray we for ourselves alone. Grant that the spirit of divine love may possess and keep all souls. Hear us on behalf of those who want to taste once more the mighty comfort of prayer. We think of people in trouble and difficulty and perplexity. Thou hast done wonderful things for Thy children when they have come to the Great Physician. Let human misery melt away in His presence. May the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings. Dispel the night of doubt and fear and for the eyes of all the perplexed may morning dawn. Amen.

I

CLINIC AND CONFESSIONAL

SOME months ago there appeared in a well-known American magazine an arresting article entitled *D.D. Versus M.D.* "We didn't go to church that Sunday morning. Instead, we drove out to Connecticut for the sole purpose, it seemed, of letting my friend from the Pacific Coast insist that autumn sumac is more significant than average sermons. He had changed. Because I had not seen him for five years, the change seemed almost a complete reversal of temperament. In my memory I had always pictured him as one who walked faithfully to church every Sunday morning. And I had thought that on that bright October Sunday in New York he would drift churchward as faithfully as in the old days. With that in my mind, I suggested that he hear Fosdick or Norwood while he was in town.

"He shrugged his shoulders. There was not a spark of interest in that shrug. There was even a faint suggestion of resentment. 'I know I should hear them,' he said, 'but I don't think I shall.' Why? What was the trouble? He explained. He said the church had meant a great deal to him until the time had come when he needed the church. The clergyman had also meant a great deal to him until the

time had come when he needed his clergyman's advice and help. In a moment of serious difficulty they had failed him. They had not shown themselves capable of coping with a common problem of everyday life. When he had gone to them with a trouble to be solved, they had answered him with nothing but theology. When he had tried to discuss intelligently the little hindrances of his life and to get things off his chest, they had insisted that a belief in God was enough.

"Until then, he said, he had believed in God; but from then on his God and their God could never be the same. They had pushed him away; they had made it impossible for him to get close to them. God became an old fashioned convention. The church went out of his life. He no longer needed it, because he had found a better solution for his troubles. He had, he confessed finally, a friend who was a psychologist . . . 'I'm fed up on lectures. A fellow would like to talk to his clergyman now and again about little troubles, but they won't let you get anything off your chest. No, I don't think I want to go to church. You see, I have a friend who is a psychologist.' " The headline of this interesting article is as follows: *The modern confessional is the doctor's office—What can the church do?*

Without pointing out the weaknesses of the above statement from the religious standpoint, does it not make you wonder how many there are who, like this man, come closer to the heart of life in a doctor's office than in the church? In this connection my readers will forgive me if for the moment I become a bit personal. For a number of years I have ha-

bitually seen hundreds of people in what amounts to the confessional, whatever one may call it, where they get things "off their chest" and pour out the inward problems of their soul. It is impossible to disguise the fact that a new spirit has come over the aspect of the typical problem that is presented. Scores of people are coming, the like of which I never knew before, whose conscious need is precisely what Professor William James described as the process, gradual or sudden, by which a soul, divided and consciously wrong, inferior and unhappy, becomes united, consciously right, superior and happy, in consequence of a firmer grasp of religious reality.

Besides this, for the past three years, I have conducted what was largely a confessional page in *The Toronto Star Weekly*, a newspaper with a large circulation. I have learned that what most of my correspondents want is not only an answer to a question of the mind, but the feeling that someone to whom they can confess their difficulties is taking a personal interest in them. It has been my responsibility and privilege to read some extraordinary documents and to hear some astonishing stories, and in many cases I have felt powerless to say anything adequate in reply; only to discover that the very willingness to listen sympathetically had somehow helped to ease the burden. Save that I have always prayed for guidance and not unwittingly shrunk from giving any service that a case might demand, I do not believe that there is any other secret in the relief I have apparently been able to bring and in the gratitude which has been so generously expressed, than in this simple willingness. I

want to write that as an encouragement to those who long to be of help to others, but who feel unfit to meet the deep perplexities of other minds, and have no special knowledge to diagnose obscure diseases of the soul. If you can literally put yourself in the other's place, if you are capable of feeling a deep sympathy, and are not afraid of becoming too involved and interested, you may work wonders that will astonish no one more than yourself. I would have this word commission many of my readers, especially those who are in positions of responsibility, parents, teachers, ministers, to keep open hearth for the mentally and spiritually outcast and perplexed. Not one in a hundred is troubled with a purely intellectual question. What most want is not a mental solution but a personal friend. But just because this is true, it is a more insistent call to all priestly souls to dare the task for which they have been fitted. May I urge this cure of souls upon ministers! Nothing is more needed in the world, and nothing so makes a minister's life worth living.

The value of a true friendship lies in the fact that we can go to the one we trust and open all our heart. The troubled child should be able to go to its mother. The son who trusted too much in his own understanding, or has found circumstances more than a match for his raw experience, should be able to seek his father's help, and thus enriched by larger knowledge and deeper experience and the assurance of a love that will not fail, the lad goes forth with a new courage and a strange sense of calm within. So all perplexed ones should be able to go to the minister and find in his presence an atmosphere in which it is

easy to unburden and confess. We cannot forget how Jesus was always at home to people in trouble. However busy in other respects, He could always spare time to listen patiently to those who sought His help in need. And the best thing the needy ones ever did for themselves, they did the day they went and told Him all that was in their hearts.

It is important to recognise the psychological necessity for confession. The best remedy for trouble is to give it an outlet. The longer it stays in, the worse it becomes. Unless the heart can be relieved it rankles and spreads and poisons. A wounded spirit who can bear? The spirit may have been wounded in any one of a hundred ways. Very few are satisfied with life as it is. There are many whose uppermost feeling is one of disgust for the seeming emptiness of life, its lack of worthy objective or high incentive to action. There are others who were once fired with enthusiasm for this or that ideal who have somehow lost it in the rush and struggle of everyday existence amid sordid realities and blind human selfishness.

Have we not all amid earth's petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a noble life,
That once seemed possible? Do we not hear
The flutter of its wings, and feel it near,
And just within our reach? It was—and yet
We lost it in this daily jar and fret,
And now live idle in a vain regret.

Others there may be whom sorrow has crushed without supplying them with any clearer insight into the true nature of things as they are. Others are filled with a secret hate that has torn the life to pieces.

Others are facing domestic tragedies which have robbed the soul of any consciousness of fellowship with the unseen. As to the sad-hearted people, the people who have almost grown accustomed to loss and disappointment, or who have been crushed under the wheels of misfortune, one can always be sure of their presence, as well as those who are tempest-tossed with passion.

It is possible to get rid of trouble by driving it underground, holding it down like a prisoner, in case it should betray itself. The result of that kind of repression is that it is never overcome, never really conquered. "Repression is not at all the same thing as self-control, because self-control implies self-knowledge, and knowledge is only reached through pain, and excessive repression is an effort to avoid pain." Nor is the best cure to plunge into some obliterating activity. Someone suggests that it will not be long before some psycho-analyst points out that a good deal of the tremendous activity of civilization is nothing but what might be called a racial neurosis. The idea is that if some detached observer of our world could analyse our ant-like activities, he would know that these people were not working because they liked work, or because they had a particular purpose in view, but solely in order to drown their conscience. However that may be, the analysts declare that the cure is neither repression—for they demand confession—nor displacement, the crushing out by some interest of a quite different nature, but by its sublimation, the giving of real expression to the instincts in healthy ways. And for this they recommend family life, and where that

cannot be, then politics, art, and, supremely, religion: the concern of one's fellows, the expression of beauty, and the love of God. It is impossible not to note how at many points all this confirms the faith and method of the Christian faith. It emphasises the need of cleansing for our nature, and for this confession and conversion are necessary.

However important confession may be from the psychological standpoint, it is even more so from the spiritual. Sincerity is a distinctive mark of the genuinely religious man. "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" is the prayer of his heart as he contemplates his thoughts and desires and all that goes to make his inner life pure. Three years ago a man in France did an astonishing thing. His name was Pierre Cayre—a hero of the world war. Ever since the coming of peace his name had been engraved upon the monument at Monbahu. His valorous deeds in fighting had been extolled by his fellow-countrymen. His memory blossomed from the dust and filled his native village with fragrance. Three years ago he came forth from his hiding and confessed the fact of his desertion. He had not been a hero but a coward. "Why should a man act like that?" asks the one who tells the story and answers, "Nobody knew. No one could harm him. Ten years had made him safe, but he could not live with a lie. He had tried it for a decade and could not go on. His wife would fall from loftiest pride in him to deepest shame; his secure and shining reputation would be blasted. Every practical argument was against confession, but he could not live with a lie."

Man is a spiritual being. He may live cowardly,

sensually, selfishly, meanly, but God's moment comes, the dreadful moment of disillusionment for every soul that has kept away from the truth.

Though no mortal e'er accused you
Though no witness e'er confused you,
Though the darkness came and fell
Over even deeds of hell.

Though no sign nor any token
Spoke of one commandment broken,
Though the world should praise and bless,
And love add the fond caress.

Still your secret sin would find you,
Pass before your eyes to blind you,
Burn your heart with hidden shame,
Scar your cheek with guilty flame.

Sin was never sinned in vain,
It could always count its slain,
You yourself must witness be,
To your own soul's treachery.

In God's moral world, the soul is ultimately compelled to see itself as it is. This stern fact sometimes makes people morbid in their introspection and their view of their own moral delinquencies. But remorse is not repentance. Morbidity is by no means humility. There is another and a higher way. Whittier points it out in his story of Rabbi Nathan, who long lived blamelessly, but fell at last. He had a friend, Rabbi Ben Isaac, and he felt that his sin had spoiled the friendship. But he would go to him and speak to him and tell him all. When they met, they embraced each other, till Rabbi Nathan, remembering

his sin, tore himself from his friend's arms and confessed. But when Rabbi Ben Isaac heard his words, he confessed that he too had sinned and he asked his friend to pray for him even as Rabbi Nathan had asked. And there in the sunset they knelt, and each prayed with his whole heart for the other,

And when at last they rose up to embrace,
Each saw God's pardon in his brother's face.

Sin, confession, absolution—that is God's order.

It may be well to remind ourselves that the word *confess* means more than acknowledging our sins to ourselves, it means to make known to others. Open acknowledgment of faults in the presence of others was certainly practised among the Jews, and adopted into the regular custom of the infant Church. Two passages of Scripture seem to be conclusive on this point. The first is in the Epistle of James: "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, it shall be forgiven him. *Confess, therefore, your sins one to another*, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." The second passage is in the First Epistle of John: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Westcott's comment on the phrase "confess our sins" is worth noting—"confess our sins, not only acknowledge them, but acknowledge them openly in

the face of men. Nothing is said or implied as to the mode in which such confession is to be made. That is to be determined by experience. Yet its essential character is clear. It extends to specific, definite acts, and not only to sin in general terms." Here also it is made clear that when men deal with God nothing less than open acknowledgment of our sin against Him will suffice. This is what God asks and the reward for such confession is the forgiveness and cleansing which only He can bestow.

The famous passage in John's Gospel can hardly be altogether separated from the subject of confession. "Jesus said unto them, whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." Without going into the endless controversy which these words have occasioned, I may be permitted to state my own conviction that they do not involve a sacerdotal theory of the Christian ministry. It is because Christ's followers are inwardly one with Him, not through any outward connection with Him, that they have that authority which His people own. Of course, none but God can forgive sins. It is also true that to those who share the spirit of Jesus—the spirit of love, sympathy, faith—there is committed the power to forgive. By such language I mean something profoundly simple and gloriously true. In all love and faith there is healing power. We all have power to bind or loose. Gladly does Christ commit to us the power of the keys. The Christian by his message and influence can loose spirits in prison and give liberty to them that are bound. Released from his own sins by the restoring grace of

God, he seeks in turn to save his fellows. This is the true spiritual meaning of Christian priesthood. Any professed trust in the grace of God which is not accompanied by the manifestation in some measure, of the same spirit of love and forgiveness, is a dead and worthless faith. It is impossible to over-estimate the gracious work which may be done by a priestly ministry in the restoration of the unworthy, and in giving encouragement and strength to the care-worn and halting in the upward struggle. Whenever and by whomsoever such ministry is rendered, it manifests the saving power of redeeming love.

Some of us remember that in the life of Henry Ward Beecher there is a beautiful story of a girl named Nancy, who was a slave. Though a white girl, she had negro blood in her veins and she was about to be sold by public auction. The usual advertisements were out, and men came to examine her to see if she was healthy and sound. When Beecher heard of this he sent a message down South, "Send up Nancy; we will go bond for more than her worth." Nancy came to Beecher's city. She came to church on Sunday morning and sat on a chair beneath the pulpit. Beecher told her story, and said to his people, "I want you to be her deliverer. Will you loose her? Will you be her emancipator?" They were not prepared for the appeal, but men took out their tie pins and women took off their rings and bracelets and put them in the plate for Nancy. Beecher came down and took his place by the side of the slave girl. He took a ring from one of the plates and put it on Nancy's wedding finger, saying, "In the name of the Lord I wed thee to liberty. The spirit of the Lord is

upon me to heal the broken-hearted, to set at liberty them that are bruised." We may have that power. It is the power of the keys.

Let the church of today seek to exercise that power and her effectiveness in the lives of men will be increased many fold. A confessional of some sort there will always be. There will always be souls, bound by anxiety and fear and guilty secrets, who feel that they must turn somewhere for guidance and hope. There is an awful loneliness in moral struggle. That struggle is pitiless when man refuses to speak of it. He seeks to fight it out in the secret places and fails because he knows not where to unburden his heart. Let a minister give himself to this priestly task and he will be convinced anew of the reality of religion, of the presence of God in his own life, near and forgiving. Let his vestry be open to those who are seeking help, and he will soon discover that few will take the trouble to come unless they have some serious purpose in doing so. In these face to face and heart to heart conversations he will establish personal relations of a sacred character and will realize the blessing of God more obviously than in any other aspect of his calling.

II

THOUGHT CONTROL

PRAYER

Eternal Father, come nigh to us, even into our inner consciousness, and draw out the filial elements that slumber, and call forth of Thine own within us. Quicken us with Thy hidden touch to the increase of love and beauty and truth and goodness. Help us to meditate in the light of Thy countenance. Help us to breathe our gladness and our sadness in Thy presence. Thus may our sadness be soothed and our gladness refined.

We thank Thee, gracious Father, for all the good that has come to us which is the outflow of Thy love to us. We rejoice that nothing can stop it, not even our own waywardness. We rejoice in contemplating the ultimate victory of Thy gracious will in our hearts. But we have to confess that we have not done as well as we ought with Thy benefits. There are those who have misused Thy power, who have allowed the river of Thy grace to run away into the mud of evil passion. Take charge of them and restore them to the true life again. There are those who are shut up in their own selfishness as in a prison, and do not realize that they are working their own undoing. We ask Thee to pluck them out, and to set them free.

Lord, we beseech Thee that all needful grace and strength may be given to Thy sorely tried children. Enable them to know that they are understood by Thee. Give comfort, give guidance, give the very spirit of Christ that they may praise Thee triumphantly. We pray for all who must toil hard to earn their living. At times it seems as though all the spirituality will be crushed out of them by the rush and the strain of the fierce competition of life. Hear us on behalf of these who have been robbed of their spiritual birthright. Give them back in richer measure that which has been wrenched from them. May Christ be magnified in our thoughts and deeds in relation to the sorrows of mankind. Amen.

II

THOUGHT CONTROL

It was as far back as 1857 that Frederick Temple said, "We are being forced into a theology based on psychology." That prophecy has not yet been fulfilled. But we are on the way, and the science of the mind is making advances which are bound to have a profound effect upon religion and theology. The history of the religious consciousness, as it manifests itself in the life of the individual, has now taken its place among the sciences. Considering the immense importance of the subject, it is rather surprising that it has been so long neglected. Whatever be the explanation of that neglect, we simply note the fact that it is here and must be reckoned with. For many it has put out of date a manner of thinking and speaking about religion which was common enough a hundred years ago. As Dean Inge says, "The psychology of religion has shown that religion is an integral and normal part of human nature, and is helping us in many ways to distinguish the healthy from the morbid in the spiritual life."

While gladly acknowledging our debt to this science, we must make a distinction between the assured results of psychology and the mere conjectures that are put forward by psychologists. No

doubt a little psychology can be a dangerous thing. One is reminded of the wise words of Sir Clifford Allbutt of Cambridge: "It is one of the misfortunes of science, as it is of social adventure, that every new point of view, as soon as revealed in part, is mobbed by a crowd of half-educated thinkers, among whom fanatics and imposters find many dupes." Some people imagine that if you can so study mind in relation to religion as to see the different processes through which the mind passes, you have explained everything. To be sure you can explain the processes of digestion, but you cannot live long without some realities to digest. Similarly the processes by which men apprehend the invisible, eternal realities may be described, but cannot be explained away. If the reality were not there, there would be none of the processes. So when some psychologists try to explain all intense religious feelings as morbid symptoms, connected with derangement of the nervous system, we may smile as we remember that they brand almost all forms of genius with the same stigma. In this connection I quote a paragraph from the wise pen of Principal A. E. Garvie. "There are some psychologists who seem to be much more comfortable in the cellar than in the upper room, and the dirtier the cellar the happier they seem to be there. They talk a great deal about the sub-conscious. But we must remember that we can know nothing about the sub-conscious except what the conscious discovers about it. We can no more get outside our consciousness than we can get outside our skins, physically. Some of these psychologists have a great affection for the instincts. Of

course, man has instincts, and in this way has a kinship with the animals, but man deals with these instincts in other ways than animals do. When these psychologists attempt to reduce human life to the level of animal existence I always fall back on the argument of Dr. Fairbairn, my old teacher: "Think of what animals have remained and man has become.' "

One of the best results of modern psychology is to be found in a renewed emphasis upon the importance of the inner life. We are all conscious of at least two selves, the life which we live in the sight of men and the life which only God and ourselves know of. How carefully we order the external self, so that we may stand well with our neighbours and keep their respect. How little attention we give to the inner self. And yet we only deceive ourselves when we live under the illusion that the two can be kept apart. It is the inner self which really makes the other. "The soul is dyed the colour of its thoughts," said Marcus Aurelius. As certain birds and beasts take on the colour of their surroundings, so our lives are continually receiving the impress of our thinking. It determines whether we shall live a drab or a bright life, an evil or a good life. It is not the outward facts which make the difference; it is rather the way we think of them, the kind of mind we bring to bear upon them. A man actually becomes like that which he sincerely and constantly has in thought. Partly as the result of direct endeavour, and partly by a method of absorption and assimilation, a man falls into the currents of his own leading reflections. The soul becomes like that which

it habitually cherishes. Wordsworth has a passage in point:

We live by admiration, hope and love,
And as these are well and wisely fixed
In dignity of being we ascend.

There is an old saying that every man is the son of his own works. We may amend it by saying, Every man is the son of his own thoughts. Man must bear and wear the character and destiny which he weaves for himself on the loom of thought. It would be no violation of accurate statement to say that everything comes from thought. The universe existed in the mind of God before it assumed visibility of form and tangibility of substance. The massive cathedral of St. Paul's, London, and the more massive cathedral of St. Peter's in Rome are the visible expressions of the thought that originally dwelt in the minds of their distinguished architects. The railway locomotive rushing along its steel highway at the rate of sixty miles an hour is only the matured form of the thought which had its birth in the mind of Sir George Stephenson. Every invention, every work of art, every enterprise which capital can float, and every organisation which the will of man can establish is the direct outcome of thought. We are all of us absolute monarchs and we govern each an empire compared with which ancient Rome or modern Britain are in their extent as a country parish. It is hardly an extravagance of Goethe that "a new universe is created every time a child is born. All our life is a thinking. Our thought world is our real world."

Mind is the master power that moulds and makes, and man is
mind,
And evermore he takes the tools of thought;
And shaping what he wills, brings forth a thousand joys, a
thousand ills;
He thinks in secret and it comes to pass—
Environment is but his looking-glass.

We cannot but be impressed that the great triumphs of modern science are those of the mind; how mind has subjugated matter and made it do its behests. Has not this truth of the power of the mind tremendous value for our moral and physical life? Is mind going to triumph in material things, and is it to have no new significance for our physical well-being? Is not the body to some extent what the mind makes it? Certain facts are well known and merely need to be mentioned to indicate what mind is doing. The temperature of the body may be lowered or heightened as the result of thought. Blushing is to be traced to thought. The pulse may be made quicker or slower by what is passing through the mind.

Years ago Sir B. Ward Richardson said he had known diabetes caused from pure mental strain. He writes: "Diabetes from sudden mental shock is a true pure type of a physical malady of mental origin." Dr. John Hunter suggested that "as the state of mind is capable of producing disease, another state of it may effect a cure." Here is the view of Sir Thomas Grainger Stewart: "In heart disease the most important element is rest. Second in importance is perhaps the element of hope. If a patient becomes persuaded that he may recover, that good

compensation may be established, he becomes more hopeful about himself, and his heart benefits accordingly. If a patient is gloomy and despondent, this damages the organ in a way we cannot at present explain." Such declarations might be multiplied. Recent medical opinions would but corroborate them. It cannot be denied that mental changes produce physical changes. If a man has been made ill through his mind, is it not possible that he may be made well through the same medium? It is not without significance in this connection that all over the civilised world governments and universities have opened departments for the treatment of disease by mental suggestion. Should not such things point the way by which the Church may minister to minds diseased? If God can get our minds wholly upon His side, what may He not do for us? If we can come to love God with our minds, who shall say what may happen? If the mind is charged and reinforced by the love of God, will not our physical as well as our spiritual well-being be mightily affected?

Dr. Dubois in his *Psychic Treatment of Nervous Disorders* insists that his cures of nervous disorders are wrought without any abstruse or mystic principles. He goes to work in the simplest and most direct manner possible to disabuse the patient's mind of one idea and fix another in its place. The new thought healers, with their principles that "thoughts are things" do the same. Psycho-analysis, though in a subtler and more roundabout way, does the same. So with all the modern systems of healing. One truth is demonstrated and utilized in them all,

the truth of the power of mind over body. The various steps by which this power is brought to the patient's relief are also essentially the same in all these systems. First the patient must be got quiet, and got rid of fears and fussiness, and brought into an attitude of confidence. He must have faith in his healer, in himself and, still more important, in some reality back of all these that makes for health and strength.

As to the attitude of the Church toward any and all of these systems of healing, let it be understood that no good comes from denunciation. It is a good deal better to understand than to denounce. There is always some sufficient reason for the spread of all such movements of thought. One reason is that we have built up in many homes and in many individual minds an atmosphere in which it is easy for people to be sick and hard for them to be well. We have taken too materialistic a view of the human being. In the doctor's section of the Harvard Club there is a motto, "We dress the wound, God heals it." We have more or less forgotten that. While not all of these modern systems depend upon religion, those that have accomplished the larger results are those in which the religious element is present and strong. For myself, I give many hours a week to personal interviews, always proceeding upon the assumption that religion furnishes those ideas which more than any and all others build men up in physical as well as spiritual wholeness. Every church can be a powerful influence in the health of its worshippers. There should be a tone of vigour, of assurance, of confidence, in public religious service, which

puts heart into people and sends them out stronger to bear life's burdens and transmute its ills into good.

✓ In his letter to the Philippians Paul stated with great emphasis the overwhelming importance of our thoughts in the conduct of life. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Our thoughts are our guiding factors in the moral life. In the channels
✓ made by our thoughts our life will and must run. And if Paul's words mean anything they surely mean that the character of our thoughts is in our own control. I agree with F. C. Spurr that we
> must distinguish between permanent and fugitive thoughts. Our fugitive thoughts come from we know not where. These need not concern us greatly. It is different with those we harbour and bind to us as permanent possessions. For these we must accept responsibility. It is of these of which it may be truth-
✓ fully said, As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. By following the injunction of Paul in this beautiful passage we may enlist the force of habit on the right
✓ side. Thus it becomes easier to see the good side in everything and everybody, and of this we may be sure that like loves like. It is impossible to possess a pure, kindly, sympathetic character and not call out all the good there is in those with whom we have to do. The man who expresses sour, cynical views of human nature is but reflecting his inner self. His conviction is confirmed within him, for the good and sufficient reason that in his presence people natur-

ally shrink from displaying their warmer and tenderer feelings.

Be noble, and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping but never dead,
Shall rise in majesty to meet thine own.
Then shalt thou see it gleam in many eyes;
Then shall pure light around thy path be shed,
And thou shalt never more be sad or lone.

This law of the reflex influence of thought works down as well as up. How many sins might be altogether avoided if the evil spirit were not allowed to take possession of the thoughts and the imagination. Take the case of a sin like covetousness. When people allow their leisure thoughts to run upon money, they make plans about what they will do when they are rich, or imagine what they would do if they were rich. In this way money becomes the chief object in their lives, and they slide by degrees into senseless parsimony. We might commend to all such the vigorous lines of Studdert Kennedy bearing the title *If I Had a Million Dollars*

I would buy me a perfect Island Home,
Sweet set in a Southern Sea,
And there would I build me a paradise,
For the heart o' my Love and me.
I would make me a perfect garden there,
The one that my dream soul knows,
And the years would flow as the petals grow,
That flame to a perfect rose.
I would rear me a perfect temple there,
A shrine where my Christ might dwell,
And then I would wake to behold my soul,
Damned deep in a perfect hell.

Our happiness may be increased or diminished by our material circumstances and environment, but it does not depend primarily on any such thing. The real joy of life never came along outward channels and never will. I commend to all my readers this word from the past. It was written by the once celebrated John Hall. "I have peered into quiet parlors, where the carpet is clean, and not old, and the furniture polished and bright; into rooms where the chairs are neat, and the floors carpetless; into kitchens where the family live and the meals are cooked and eaten, and the boys and girls are as blithe as the sparrows in the thatch overhead; and I see that it is not so much wealth and learning, nor clothing, nor servants, nor toil, nor idleness, nor town, nor country, nor station, as tone and temper, that render homes happy and wretched." There is a wise word spoken out of rich knowledge and experience. The prime secret of happiness is in a fulness of life composed of noble qualities, the reigning law of which is harmony and peace. The things we must see to and cherish before we can know happiness are the principles underlying all our life efforts, the habits of our affections and desires, the states of our minds. I wonder if anyone reads Spenser's *Faerie Queene* nowadays? He puts the right sentiment into the mouth of one of his characters:

It is the mynd that maketh good or ill,
That maketh wretch or happie, rich or poore;
For some, that hath abundance at his will,
Hath not enough, but wants in greatest store;
And other, that hath little, asks no more,
But in that little is both rich and wise,
For wisdom is most riches!

Before we end we may well raise the question, Is there a Gospel for the thoughts? Can they be redeemed? For answer we may turn to another word of Paul's, "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." From what has gone before it should be clear that any conformity to Christ which does not include the thought is vain and partial, and vain because it is partial. As a response to the prayer that comes from the depths of our being, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults" it is nothing short of a heavenly benediction to be assured that we may be swept onward in all our thoughts by the stream of force that radiates from Christ. When the thought is sanctified the fountain that feeds all the streams of action is sanctified. It is the glory of Christ that He changes the darkness of our sadness into the sunlight of right thinking and victorious living. It is the glory of Christ that He sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts—that master-passion for bringing our thoughts into captivity. It is the glory of Christ that He gives life to the full, that in an expanded horizon our bitter and narrow thoughts take wings and fly away. We would be safer in mid-ocean on a rudderless ship, safer travelling full speed in an automobile that had lost its driver, than in a world like this under the dominion of impulse, unchecked, uncontrolled by thought. A man may get back his self-control when he submits to Christ control. The Christ conquered man is the self-conquering man. All the destinies of human life are inward. To be a conqueror in the soul is to be a conqueror everywhere.

The world stands out on either side,
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through;
But east and west will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

III

THE BEST MIND CURE

PRAAYER

Infinite Father, Thou movest us to utter ourselves at Thy feet. In many ways Thou dost fulfil Thyself. Thou art with us when we put forth effort in labour, to strengthen and uphold. Thou art with us when we sit apart and think seriously, to give power and to guide our thoughts. Thou art with us in our sincere inquiries, to enlighten our darkness and to reveal to us according to our receptiveness and need. Thou art with us when we pray, to hear and answer. It is not for nothing that we are led to pour out our souls to Thee. In our reaching to lay hold on Thee, Thou dost lay hold on us.

Some come before Thee with hearts brimming over with joy, feeling that the world is indeed the dwelling-place of good. Today some new benefit is coming to birth in their lives; they feel themselves to be richer and fuller than they were yesterday, and they are glad. To others life is hard. Looking forward to the future, they see nothing but shadow. It is not Thy will that Thy children should go through life dispirited. So we beseech Thee to create in every one a quiet hope, a sure confidence that the best is yet to be, and that Thou hast even here in this world a something for them to do which shall dignify their souls and give to them the life and love eternal. We pray for all who find it difficult to say "then welcome each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough, each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go." We are not praying that we may be screened from all the unpleasantness of life. We ask rather that Thou wilt give us such spiritual strength, such insight, such accession of confidence, that as we go into the world that seems to have maltreated us, we may carry something of the life of love that never dies, that never grows less, that never disappoints. Amen.

III

THE BEST MIND CURE

LACK of peace is one of the notable spiritual facts today. There is no lack of energy. In the educated world of today as compared with that of a century ago, men have changed from lassitude to zest. Machinery has increased the speed of our existence until in a multitude of cases nervous and physical endurance have reached their limit. I have read this description of a modern business man: "Before day-break an alarm clock wrests him from his fitful slumbers. He gulps down business news along with his eggs and coffee. He plans business on his way to the office. He spends the morning reading business letters, dictating new business, and interviewing old business associates. He keeps a business engagement for luncheon; and then in the afternoon routes himself and schedules himself and despatches himself through his business appointments as though he were an express train. After everyone else has left the office, he wraps up his business papers and carries them home in a brief-case. He arrives late at dinner, and stares glassily into space, conjuring up phantoms. The telephone rings. It is a business acquaintance who knew he could be reached at meal-time. Ten minutes later he returns to the table, too

distraught to eat. He spends the evening poring over budgets, business reports, and trade journals. At midnight he crawls to bed. After all, bed is the most efficient place to worry out tomorrow's business problems. The end of a perfect day."

Amid the restless activity of our day what sign is there of peace? I am not altogether concerned about the bustle and change and moving about. In themselves these things are not incompatible with the spirit of repose. Activity must be the main expression of man's life. A cloistral seclusion cannot possibly be the ideal for many people. Mere doing nothing is no sign of peace, indeed it may be the evidence of the want of it. A world of loafers would be by no means a more peaceful world. If you have a lot of boys and girls together to do nothing you will not get peace as your result, though you may have great activity. Yet I am sure that doctors and psychological observers would tell the same tale today as ministers and moralists. They would speak of restlessness being a disease of the men and women of our time.

At no time has there been so great a command over the forces of Nature. Nowhere has man's will been so triumphant, so far as governing the physical world is concerned. The riches of the universe are exploited in ways not dreamed of a few generations ago. Most of those who read these words could tell of quite simple things that have changed in this respect since their childhood. In many ways outward pain has been reduced to a minimum. The needful friction of life is for many almost non-existent, and for all of us there is ease in matters

which took trouble even a short time ago. We have gained great victories in the realm of Nature. Are we so sure that they have been balanced by corresponding victories in the realm of the spirit? Science may give us wonderful powers over the natural world. Need we be told that these may be misused in blowing men to pieces and deluging the world with blood? We can understand why Sir Oliver Lodge should pray that we shall never discover the secret of the atom until we know how to use it for the well-being of our fellow-mortals.

With all our greasing of the wheels of life it is significant that the diseases of the nerves and of the brain are on the increase. Lunacy is becoming more pronounced, while the number of smaller complaints allied to it are incalculable. One of the most common troubles in modern life is what is called a nervous breakdown. All sorts of obscure conditions are included under this vague description. It is a condition in which a person loses control of the machinery of personality, the mind itself. "It ranges from a merely worried state, through a long and tortuous series of pathological conditions including hysteria, nervousness, melancholy, delusion, double personality, to one indistinguishable from insanity; and upon this perilous gradient some of us are continually finding ourselves beginning to descend." We usually explain the cause as overwork, or as coming from the distressing problems of our time, or to the tremendous strain which our crowded career puts upon the machinery of the brain. Such explanations do not bring much comfort, for life is not likely to get less crowded and the problems less pressing. Dr.

Orchard says the actual conditions may be described as internal mental war. Whatever the cause we may be sure that the mind only gets out of control as life moves away from the centre of inward peace. A man of any inward illumination knows that almost all our life is a wandering away from that centre.

Take the materialistic plane of life, at the level of which a good deal of our living takes place. It is an alternation of business and pleasure, of severe tension and relaxation. It is what we may call the city life, whether on its grinding or on its gay side. It has its successes and its failures, but success and failure alike are measured by the standard of the world's coarse thumb and finger. This being busy about many things, with its over-anxiousness and harassing care, may be the most superficial life of all. There is nothing dishonourable or ignoble about it in itself; indeed, there is much that is admirable. I do not even suggest that it is one unbroken monotony of weariness and strain. There are breathing spaces when plans succeed, and when ships come home. There are reliefs and satisfactions in purely worldly pleasure which we need not despise. If there are men such as Browning described as "finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark," to such this type of life on its successful side may bring content. But most of us are not "untroubled by a spark." And I think that many will agree that when we have tramped for days along this hot and dirty road, when we have been caught up and entangled in a round of busy cares, we have heard from somewhere in the neglected and half-forgotten deeps of

our being this haunting refrain, "Peace I leave with you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled."

Or let us try and realise the experience of those men and women for whom life seems less like a labour than a fight. They are up against the pressure of circumstances all the time. They are keeping the wolf from the door. The weakest of them are wrestling with hereditary tendencies which make them an easy prey to temptation. The strongest of them are battling against the limitations which fetter and depress their lives. On their behalf, the benevolent activities of the community are at work. They try to provide them with open spaces and amusements of one kind and another which may distract their thoughts and give them at any rate a passing release. They are working to destroy the kingdom of poverty and disease and world-selfishness. All this is noble and beautiful and divine, but it will not ultimately satisfy.

In an old copy of an English religious journal I have read a significant story of the late Archdeacon Wilson. He was the master of Clifton College, and some of the ablest of his women students opened a class for teaching the poorest of the men in a neglected district. They were fired by a noble impulse to give themselves on behalf of the unfortunate. They read to them, they taught them reading and writing, they sang to them, and the men gathered to them in increasing numbers. After some months they asked the men whether there was anything in particular that they wanted to hear more about. There was silence; and then a low whisper was heard from among them. One of the women

went up to the speaker. "What was it you wished specially to hear about?" "Could you tell us," he replied, "something about Jesus Christ?"

It is easily possible to miss the deepest significance of that request. We should not be content with the meaning which perhaps the speaker himself would put upon his words. In all probability he was asking deeper than he knew. It was not a cry for something to be done for them in their distress, for everything that love and enthusiasm could do for them was being done by those self-sacrificing women. At bottom it was a cry for inward peace. It was the storm-driven soul yearning to be led back and placed where calmness and confidence could be realised. It was the unstable seeking for equipoise. It was the tempest-tossed seeking for anchorage. It was the feeble hands and helpless, groping blindly in the darkness.

The souls of men and women go forth to many workings and pursuits, but they leave the deepest life-need unsupplied, the deepest life-hunger unsatisfied, the central thirst unquenched. An American periodical published this quaint verse about a poet in modern New York:

I made a little song today
And then I wandered down Broadway
And saw the strange, mad people run
And dance about me in the sun;
Or dive into the underground
Like rabbits frightened by the sound
Of their own scampering through the grass.
I watched a thousand people pass,
But not a one did I hear say
"I made a little song today."

I made a little song today—
It sang beside me all the way
Until I reached the lower town
Where crowds went surging up and down.
Their eyes were hard, their faces white,
A few of them looked glad and bright
Because the Bulls—or was it Bears?—
Had given them gold for worthless shares:
But I was happier than they,
I made a little song today.

There amid a world of ceaseless din and strife and worry, one man had found the gift of inward peace. Where is that peace-centre? Do we not know well? When we go forth out of ourselves in any direction—into the realm of material things, or of social action—our common witness is that it is not there. But if we could return in upon ourselves I think we should find it. Such a life must be one whose current flows

as still

As a broad river's peaceful might,
Which, by high tower and lowly mill
Seems following its own sweet will,
And yet doth ever flow aright.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” Is it really such a simple matter as Isaiah suggests? Can the thing after which we are all our lives seeking, the desire for which stirs within our hearts through almost all our waking hours—is it really attainable by so easy a path? We know our lives ought not to be so restless as they are, nor our hearts so tortured, nor the quietude of our souls so often and so sadly broken. Here is a life

whose resources are limitless, whose energies are irresistible, whose peace is unbroken, because the mind is stayed on God, because it is the life of God in the soul of man. Filled with this peace we can meet the shadowy future with no fear in our hearts. We can be sure that whatever may be true of the income that can be counted, the revenues of the spirit will be ample and unfailing, and that no matter how the strife may rage around us, our souls will dwell at peace. When life is difficult and business bad, and disease so common, we may be victorious and happy because we have found a secret source of strength and courage. If our religion is not lifting us above the ordinary causes of gloom and depression, it is not functioning. The man whose mind is stayed on God is in living touch with the ultimate source of all true inspiration. Even in the midst of the bustling city he makes a little song and carries it in his heart and gaiety in his spirit.

That was a great word of Isaiah's assuring us that peace of mind is enforced by staying the mind upon God. To put it psychologically, it means to have a great many associative centres of the mind connected with the idea of God, so that it is impossible for us to think for long, to have any kind of mental activity, without bringing us to God. The effects of this staying of the mind upon God are obvious. They mean peace. We have so much to learn in this respect today. Our lack of peace is due to our failure to keep open the lines of communication between our minds and God. We must learn afresh how to *stay* the mind upon God. We must learn in this feverish age how to be quiet, how to wait and listen.

In Hugh Walpole's *Fortitude* there is a picture of an old author giving advice to a younger: "The whole duty of Art is listening for the voice of God. I have hurried, I have scrambled, I have fought and striven, but as an Artist only those hours that I have spent listening, waiting, have been my real life."

Here is a New Testament scene. Paul the aged is in a cell in Rome. When we think of him we think of his restless energetic mind ever planning new campaigns, his perils by sea and land, his imprisonments, the care of the churches that rested upon him, his conflicts with error and opposition. About the last thing we think of is peace. If in some gallery we should come across a painting of Paul in prison, or Paul on the wrecked and tattered ship drifting upon the forbidding coast of Melita, and should find it labelled *Peace*, we should wonder what freak of a mad artist was before us. Well, here he is in prison. If we tarry a moment we shall discover that this turbulent soul knew much about peace. He is now awaiting his sentence. In the meantime he dictates a letter to some friends. The secretary has just written the words "And the peace of God." It does seem, as one suggests, that the Apostle pauses in order to get the right words with which to describe this wonderful gift, and baffled, concludes with a sort of anti-climax, "which passeth all understanding." "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall garrison your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus." Because this peace passes all understanding it does not follow that it belongs to the realm of the utterly mysterious. It is not

something simply bestowed by God; it is His own peace, and He only gives it by giving us Himself.

This peace provides a garrison for heart and mind. If peace is within, it matters little what foes are without. A ship's compass is so adjusted as to keep its level amidst all the heavings of the sea. Though forming part of a structure that feels every motion of the restless waves, it has an arrangement of its own that keeps it always in place and in working order. Look at it when you will and although it may be trembling it is pointing to the pole. It is surprising how much pain and unrest there may be in the sensibility, and yet peace in the depth of the mind. Charles Finney tells how in crossing the Atlantic the ship was overtaken by a gale of wind. Upon the deck the roar and the confusion were terrific. The spray from the crests of the waves blew upon the face with almost force enough to blister it. The noise of the waves howling and roaring and foaming was almost deafening. Then he went down into the engine room and everything was quiet. The mighty engine was moving with a quietness and stillness in striking contrast with the war without. So with the life of man when the heart is garrisoned with peace.

When the winds are raging o'er the upper ocean,
And billows wild contend with angry roar,
'Tis said, far down beneath the wild commotion,
That peaceful stillness reigneth evermore.

Far, far beneath, the noise of tempests dieth,
And silver waves glide ever peacefully.

And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the sabbath of that deeper sea.

So to the heart that knows Thy love, O Purest!
There is a temple, sacred evermore,
And all the babble of life's angry voices,
Dies in hushed stillness at its peaceful door.

It is the unrested heart of man that is his real plague. A turn in our fortunes seems like an overwhelming catastrophe because our hearts have been set upon them as essential. If we knew where the treasures of life are stored, how much less outward loss would count. We are wounded by what people say about us, because we allow external standards to determine our feelings. It is not what we are but what others think we are that we have come to consider important.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled." It was near the end of a stormy career that the Master spoke these words. And to men who were at the very centre of a world seething with unrest, He promises them the gift of peace. In what did it consist? Not in stagnation or inactivity; not a spiritual narcotic which absolves us from climbing on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things. Nor is it freedom from moral warfare, nor freedom from external trials. What then is it? I answer in the language of James Reid, "True peace is the harmony between our nature and our environment. Our true environment is spiritual. When we are in accord with God we find peace. . . . There were no shadows between Christ and God. There was perfect under-

standing between Him and His Father, and where there are no shadows between a man and God, no earthly trouble can break this deep and final peace of the spirit."

In the castle of my soul there is a little postern gate
Where, when I enter, I am in the presence of God.
In a moment, in the turning of a thought I am where God is.
When I meet God there all life gains a new meaning,
Small things become great, and great things small,
Lowly and despised things are shot through with glory,
My troubles seem but the pebbles on the road,
My joys seem like the everlasting hills,
All my fever is gone in the great peace of God,
And I pass through the door from Time into Eternity.

IV

FEAR

PRAYER

Unto Thee, O Lord, do we lift up our soul. We need Thy presence every passing hour. We pray that it may please Thee to show mercy to all sorts and conditions of men, and help us to make supplication for them. We thank Thee that in calling Thee "our Father" we realise our human brotherhood, and that the same prayer which binds us to Thy feet binds us also to our fellow-men. We pray that Thou wilt remember all who are forgotten by their fellows. Befriend all that are in loneliness and solitude. Remember all who forget Thee.

If some poor wandering child of Thine
Have spurned today the Voice divine,
Now, Lord, the gracious work begin;
Let him no more lie down in sin.

Visit every stricken, desolate, afflicted child of Thine. May all who are in sorrow receive divine comfort. May all wounded and tormented spirits feel Thy soothing and healing hand upon them.

Watch by the sick; enrich the poor
With blessings from Thy boundless store,
Be every mourner's sleep tonight
Like infants' slumbers, pure and light.

Father, send Thy blessings down upon all soldiers of the common good. We bring before Thee teachers of the children, judges on the bench, business men managing commercial affairs, physicians seeking to heal men's bodies, ministers engaged in the cure of souls—upon all such let Thy grace rest. Re-inspire Thy Church with larger inbreathings of Him who is "a Priest for ever, not after the laws of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." Save the nations from all that threatens to cause suffering or to minister to sin. Grant that all who lead the thoughts of the peoples may set their faces against strife. Help them to lift up the standard of world peace in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

IV

FEAR

KIPLING has a famous story called *How Fear Came to the Jungle*. It is a tale of a great water-famine, when death was on every side. But fear does not *come* to the jungle. It is always there, just as it is everywhere in the world of Nature. Darwin tells us that even so low an organism as the worm is the victim of fear. And as for men, it is a racial inheritance. It is said that the infant in arms is afraid of falling from its mother's knee, and the clutch of the nervous hand is the instinctive attempt—an instinct derived from generations of fearful ancestry—to secure its doubtful position in the world. We all remember the fears of childhood, the effect of the darkness, sudden noises and strange faces upon the tender consciousness. Afterwards came the fears of youth, totally different in kind but none the less terrifying—the fears of failure in the world, the fear that we would never accomplish anything, that we would never win our place among our fellows, the fear of people who filled us with a vague alarm and misgiving whenever they were near. And when we grew up from young manhood to middle age we cannot say that the fears left us, though they changed

in character. They continued in one shape or another to haunt our life and darken our days.

On the way to our theme let us clear the ground of that misunderstanding which in this connection is made easy by the ambiguous sense of words. Fear is a word with a double meaning. If we go back for a moment to the teaching of the Scriptures we will find that while one kind of fear is condemned as baseless and unworthy, another kind is exalted as the secret of the larger life. On the one hand we are told that "perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath torment." And on the other hand we are told that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." If fear in these two sentences means the same thing we are faced by an absolute contradiction, but it does not. In the nobler sense of the word it is not fear that is meant at all. It is reverence and awe, not fright or nervous shrinking. The redemption of life from fear does not mean that men are left free to do as they like without regard to consequences. Nor does it involve a failure to recognise that fear is one of the normal reactions of our nature, and a part of the protective and preserving machinery of our minds.

There are some fears which are good for us. Such is the fear of life, the conception of life as so noble a gift of God that we should fear to throw it away. As George A. Gordon puts it: "If nothing were dear to man, and if what is dear were in no danger, there would be no place for fear. Life is smitten with fear because it is precious." The fact that the highest qualities in one's character are suffering is a legitimate object of fear. That man who is not afraid to

lose worth, who is indifferent to the inferior life that is coming upon him, is in a degraded mood. To quote Dr. Gordon once more: "Men sorrow over the wrong things. They are grieved over material loss, over outward reverse and disaster. The nobler among them weep over the sorrows and losses of the good, and the tragedies that sometimes involve the sublimest lives. These are not proper objects of sorrow. These men have within their hearts the eternal consolations." Milton sings for all the brave when in recounting his sorrows he discovers his conquering sense of God and declares his singing voice

Unchanged

To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd 'round,
And solitude; yet not alone while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when morn
Purples the east.

Fear of abusing life, fear of the loss of the ideal, fear of that which hardens the heart, is a reasonable fear. If a man be destitute of such fear he is consciously or unconsciously descending into a lower kingdom.

Or take the fear of dishonour. That surely is a patent of nobility. Every noble man fears shame. In this connection I think of Robert Browning's stirring poem "Clive." The old hero of Plassey is talking to some friends at dinner, who were asking him if he were ever afraid, and he proceeds to tell them of the one occasion in his life when he felt fear. It was when he was a junior clerk in the East India Company and had recently gone out to India. He

was playing cards one night, and an officer was also playing, and young Clive saw him cheat. He charged him, and the officer indignant, sprang up and demanded satisfaction. Pistols were at hand and they fired. Clive's pistol missed, and in a moment the other man's pistol was in his face, and as Clive tells the story the people at the table say, "No wonder he feared, a boy, with death confronting him." Clive cried out, "That was not my fear, it was not the fear of death, but lest the bully should have said, 'There, keep your life, calumniator, worthless life I freely spare.' What if, with such words as those, he had cast away his weapon—how should I have borne it?" It was no fear of death, but of dishonour that entered the hero's soul. Happily, the story goes that the bully seeing the dauntless courage of the boy, dropped the pistol and left the room, implicitly acknowledging that he had cheated. It is that fear of dishonour which makes a man strong. Be it said with emphasis that some fears are noble and salutary.

We turn now to deal with that other and opposite kind of fear that enwraps men like an atmosphere, that haunts and depresses them and drives joy from their lives. In his delightful book *Where No Fear Was*, A. C. Benson says: "There is one thing which seems to me to have always and invariably hampered and maimed me whenever I have yielded to it (and I have often yielded,) and that is fear. It can be called by many names, all of them ugly, anxiety, timidity, moral cowardice. But whatever we call it, I can never trace the smallest good in giving way to it. It has been from my earliest days *the shadow*,

and I think it is the shadow in the lives of many men and women."

There is a world-wide aspect of such fear which bars the way of human progress. Miss Evelyn Underhill complains that "the civilised world at present seems to many of us to be living under a cloud. Its dominant mood is that of unhappiness, depression, unrest. It is obsessed by anxieties and suspicions, uncertain of its hold on life. It has forgotten joy. Like a neurotic man, whose sickness has no name, and few definite symptoms beyond general uneasiness and lack of hope, it is incapable of the existence which it feels to be wholesome and complete. Impotent and uncertain of aim, full of conflicts it cannot resolve, society is becoming more and more querulous, less and less reasonable."

The war accentuated the malady; it did not cause it. It was a symptom of the disease, not the disease itself. Behind it all is one and the same spirit—fear. It was fear that caused the war. One nation looks at another nation across its frontiers and with every increase in that nation's power the fear rises as to how that power may be used. So armaments are piled up to give a sense of security, until by the very spirit of their policy the contingency arises. Take away fear from the heart of the nations and the greatest step has been taken towards the elimination of war. The same may be said about the social situation of the hour. Who can tell what line of action the masses of the people may take under the conditions Miss Underhill describes? The keen interest in Russian affairs is partly due to the fear in the air that revolutions may spread.

Whatever of value others may say about these larger fears, I may be permitted to point out that they have their likeness in our own hearts where they are playing havoc with peace and character. Those abnormal fears, which the physician and the psychologist describe as phobias, seize upon even healthy minds. The fear of illness keeps many people from feeling well. Flora Biglow Guest in *Casting Out Fear* tells of a woman who changed her street car three times in going two miles, so as to run less danger of catching a contagious disease. Every psychiatrist knows that the fear of disease is one of the commonest causes of adult neurosis. The idea that certain maladies "run in families" causes the lurking fear that some taint has been inherited. And here fear hath torment. It predisposes us to the very thing we dread. To fear disease may mean to incur it or to cause it.

In this connection one naturally thinks of that remarkable human document *A Mind That Found Itself* by Clifford W. Beers. This able man had an older brother who suddenly developed epilepsy. It fell to his lot while still a boy to nurse the invalid. Being of a sensitive and nervous temperament, he became obsessed with the idea that he might become an epileptic too. Like most adults he vigorously repressed his fear, while all the time he brooded upon it in morbid and melancholy solitude. The strain of his last year in Yale convinced him that he was already a victim of the disease. "Doomed to what I then considered a living death," he writes, "I thought of epilepsy, I dreamed of epilepsy, until thousands of times during the six years that this

disquieting idea persisted, my overwrought imagination seemed to drag me to the very verge of an attack." The result was an extreme mental depression culminating in insanity. After three years in an insane asylum Clifford Beers has come back again and is devoting his life to helping others in their conflict with fear.

An ancient document informs us that King Solomon kept threescore valiant men near his bed-chamber, "every man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night." Now we live in circumstances that are widely different from those of Solomon, yet is it not true that we also know something of fears in the night? It may not be during the hours when we are facing the actual difficulties of life that we are apt to become unmanned by our fears, as in our sleepless hours of inactivity when imagination conjures up phantoms in our minds. In this connection we recall the lines of Kipling:

It was not in the open fight we threw away the sword,
But in the lonely watching in the darkness by the ford;
The waters lapped, the night-wind blew,
Full-armed the Fear was born and grew,
And we were flying ere we knew,
From Panic in the night.

The more sensitive a man's imagination is, the more open is he to the attacks of fear. It is in the hours of darkness when the healing winds from the field of sleep will not come to lull us into forgetfulness; it is "in the dead unhappy night, when the rain is on the roof," and the vitalities of body and mind are at their lowest ebb that the spectres close in upon us in

serried ranks and fill us with gloomy forebodings of ill.

Another class of fears arises from the uncertainties of life, such as the fear of failure, of poverty, of bereavement, of old age, of death. In times like these when nervous debility tends to become the prevalent disease, these things become an obsession of the mind. It is impossible to deal with individuals today without realizing that as life becomes more artificial and complex these lesser fears are on the increase. Closely related to those just mentioned is the fear of man. "They say" has always been one of the most powerful influences in turning men and women into cowards. Failure in business is the shadow that follows many a man today. As Sir W. Robertson Nicoll said of it years ago, "The man who feels its approach, feels it always; today or yesterday, waking or asleep; and what is worse, he expects to feel it tomorrow." Such are some of the fears which lay their fetters upon us and prevent the true self from shining through.

It is plainly evident that no man can be himself or accomplish any genuine service in the world until he has conquered his fears. Is it possible to find deliverance? Biblical writers would answer confidently in the affirmative. "I sought the Lord," exults one of the Psalmists, "and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears." No one can read the Book of Psalms without marking this deliverance. "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" "The Lord is my Shepherd—I will fear no evil." "The Lord is thy keeper. He shall keep thee from all evil." These men believed that part of

God's salvation is deliverance from fear. They would urge us to fight our fears in the belief that they can be overthrown, to let them know that no longer will we weakly acquiesce in their bullying.

There is a wrong way to fight fear. Modern psychology recognises that the subject is one of the most intricate problems of human personality. Direct attack may serve in dealing with a simple fear, but fears are often anything but simple. They take their rise in the depth of human personality in often forgotten experiences, in the "repressions" of earlier days. It is fatal to drive them underground as many a brave man did during the days of war. That leaves them ready to start up again, bringing with them mental and physical disaster. There have been many extraordinary cures in the victims of shell-shock. Competent practitioners have set numbers of these prisoners free. Once the fear has been tracked in the depths of the personality and brought into the light of day, men have found deliverance. It may even be no small help to put our terrors into words. That often makes it easier to face them and overthrow them.

In the long run everything will depend on our attitude toward life—whether it is mainly one of faith or of fear. If it is true, as H. G. Wells says, that "the beginning of aristocracy is the subjugation of fear," then the true aristocracy must be created by faith. When life has been paralysed by fear, faith empowers it. When life has been imprisoned by fear, faith sets it free. When life has been disheartened by fear, faith encourages it. When life has been rendered sick by fear, faith heals it. When life has been

narrowed by fear; faith broadens it. When life has been depressed by fear, faith makes it glad. Fear is the faith-faculty gone astray. When we say a man has no faith in life we really mean that he is using his faith-faculty wrongly. Let a new influence come into his life, even Christ himself, and his faith is given a new direction. No longer does he believe that he is hopelessly bound by habit, or whipped by circumstance. He has faith in God, in himself, in available resources that enable him to conquer. "There are plenty of people," says a modern newspaper writer, "to do the possible; you can hire them at forty dollars a month. The prizes are for those who perform the impossible. If a thing can be done, experience and skill can do it; if a thing cannot be done, only faith can do it." There you are! Faith releases unused power.

The longer I deal with individuals the more convinced I am that Jesus is still the Master of the soul when the fears of life cast their gloom over human spirits. He was always telling his disciples not to fear. "Why are ye so fearful? How is it ye have no faith?" He asked when the tempest swept down the lake. He urged them not to be afraid "of them that kill the body, and after that can do no more." At the very end He said to them, "Let not your heart be afraid." Nor was He content with warning against fear. He lifted the burden by healing those who were under the fear of disease, by forgiving those who felt themselves outcasts, by assuring one that her faith, even with fear in it, had made her whole. His touch has still its ancient power. The blind may see, the lame walk, the worse than dead raised to life again.

There standest One in our midst who is abundantly able to give the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

The deepest cause of all fear, according to Jesus, is disbelief in God. He tracks it to its source and finds that it comes from a mind that has not found its true relation to God. The God whom Jesus bids us trust is not One who keeps us sheltered like birds in a nest. It is confidence in God, but more. "It is the confidence in God which at the same time consents to what He is seeking to make us." It is the assurance that the Eternal Father is with us when the night is blackest, even as He was with Jesus when every circumstance conspired against Him. The whole issue of whether we can march breast forward unafraid depends upon whether we look up to the God whom Jesus revealed.

It is the fear of that God that casts out the fear that enslaves. We moderns need not abandon too hastily the idea that there is nothing in God to fear. There is no love which does not carry with it a reverent fear. A boy may fear to incur his father's wrath, but he will fear still more to wound his mother's love. To fear God is not to be in terror of God. What did those of an earlier generation mean when they said that one among them "feared God," or that he was a "God-fearing man?" They had in mind a man who walked humbly with God, a man concerned above all things that he should co-operate with God in what God was seeking to make him. "We want both words, fear and love, to describe that humbling passion which the soul feels for One who is Maker, Redeemer, and Friend."

Perfect love casteth out fear, but it does so by sublimating fear unto itself. The Christ-love drives out fear, not by preserving the self, but by sacrificing it, and by stretching itself on the cross from which fear fled. Love lifts us above the reach of fear, because it takes us from material things that change and die to things that are spiritual and eternal. Wherever sacrificial love is seen, there we have a glimpse of the infinite being of God. In the prose poem of Tourgènieff which I quote in full we are shown that even in a sparrow love may be sublime. "I was on my way home from hunting, and was walking up the garden avenue. My dog was running on in front of me. Suddenly he slackened his pace, and began to steal forward as though he scented game ahead. I looked along the avenue; and I saw on the ground a young sparrow, its beak edged with yellow, and its head covered with soft down. It had fallen from the nest (a strong wind was blowing and shaking the birches of the avenue), and there it sat and never stirred, except to stretch out its little half-grown wings in a helpless flutter.

"My dog was slowly approaching it, when suddenly, darting from the tree overhead, an old black-throated sparrow dropped like a stone right before his nose, and, all ruffled and flustered, with a plaintive, desperate cry, flung itself once, twice, at his open jaws with their great teeth. It would save its young one: it screened it with its own body; the tiny frame quivered with terror; the little cries grew wild and hoarse; it sank and died. It had sacrificed itself. What a huge monster the dog must have seemed to it, and yet it could not stay up there on

its safe bough. A power stronger than its own will tore it away. My dog stood still, and then slunk back disconcerted. Plainly he, too, had to recognise that power. I called him to me; and a feeling of reverence came over me as I passed on. Yes, it was really reverence I felt before that little heroic bird and the passionate outburst of its love. Love, I thought, is verily stronger than death and the terror of death. By love, only by love, is life sustained and moved."

Love casteth out fear. Love dies, and, dying, lives.
Love waits and hopes, and, asking nothing, gives.
Love is a seed that comes to flower in pain;
A mystic rose that passion seeks in vain.
Its breath is life, within, around, above;
Love is the Universe, and God is Love.

V

FAILURE

PRAYER

Infinite Father, we pray that to us may be given a portion in that changeless blessedness and deep tranquil gladness which comes to those who live near Thee. We have so often sought our delights amidst the things that are transient and perishable. We have so often wandered into the far country of our own selfish thoughts and desires. Do Thou recall us. Recall us by the life giving energy of the Divine Spirit that we may draw near to that inexhaustible love so clearly revealed in Thee. We bless Thee that Thou hast laid upon us the mighty privilege of shining here as lights in the world. Forgive the feebleness and flickering of the light that comes from us. Fill our emptiness with Thy fulness that our lives may mirror and reflect something of Thy glory.

Grant unto us that gracious help which our several circumstances and many conditions may require. In the midst of the stress of this busy world grant unto us the tranquillity of Thy peace. In the midst of dishonesty and falsehood grant unto us courage to be honest, straightforward, truthful. In the midst of the cynicism of the day grant unto us vision. In the midst of industrial greed and strife grant unto us insight to see that better days may come.

If there are any of us compassed about by some overmastering temptation, do Thou establish our faltering footsteps and keep us from falling. If there are any of us who have been overtaken by the night of doubt, groping in darkness and waiting in despair for light to shine upon our paths, do Thou dissipate the darkness and send forth Thy light and give a deep realization of Thy truth. We remember all who are in sorrow or trouble, and beseech Thee that all sad and lonely hearts may be comforted and companioned by Thee. We remember all who are in perplexity, and pray that they may turn from the anxieties that distract and come into the secret place of the most High. Amen.

V

FAILURE

It is very necessary to define failure and success before you attribute the one or the other to yourself. It is possible that a man who has utterly failed may regard himself a success, or that one may think he has failed when he has gloriously succeeded. What looks like failure may be the first phase of success and what appears success may prove the worst kind of failure. John Keats might no doubt have succeeded as a physician, had he dismissed from his mind the lure of poetry, and given his entire attention to medicine. As W. J. Dawson says, "He would have had the proud satisfaction of writing John Keats, M.D., upon his door-plate, but he would never have written his name upon the page of Time. He would have lived respectably, and died respected; and would certainly have escaped what he himself called the fierce hell of relative failure in attempting great objects. He would have gone about his daily duties with a humble assiduity, and never would have had occasion to say in the bitterness of his heart, 'My name is writ in water.'" But would all this have been success? Would all this have atoned to the world for the loss of the poetry which has gladdened the hearts of three generations?

The question we raise here is a very urgent one, What is success in life? I have come across this definition: "that life alone succeeds which attains the highest ends possible to its capacity." The definition is far from perfect, but it has two obvious merits. For one thing it enables us to accept ourselves and to realize that we are not responsible for the limit of the capacity with which we have been endowed. Undoubtedly many worry over their limitations because they keep comparing themselves with others anxious to accomplish what they accomplish. It is a great day in a man's life when he decides that his one responsibility is to handle his special situation as well as possible. Consulting psychologists do not hesitate to tell us that a large proportion of the cases of emotional maladjustment with which they deal are due to the fact that people will not accept themselves. "Born to be berry bushes and produce good berries, we lift anxious, envious eyes to apple trees with their larger sized fruit, or born to be apple trees and produce good apples, we look with worried jealousy at maple trees with their more capacious shade, or born to be maple trees, we are anxious because elm trees are taller and more graceful. We will not accept ourselves."

The definition quoted above has another merit—the merit of freeing the whole question of success from the pressure of life's materialisms. John Foster tells a striking story of a rich young man who squandered his wealth and was soon abandoned by the boon companions he had gathered around him. Reduced to absolute want he one day went out of the house with an intention to put an end to his

life. But wandering awhile he came to the brow of an eminence which overlooked what were lately his estates. Here he sat down and remained fixed in thought a number of hours, at the end of which he sprang from the ground with a vehement exulting emotion. He had formed his resolution, which was that all these estates should be his again. He had formed his plan which he instantly began to execute. He walked hastily forward, determined to seize the first opportunity, of however humble a kind, to gain any money, and resolved absolutely not to spend, if he could help it, a penny of whatever he might obtain.

The first thing that drew his attention was a heap of coals shot out of the carts on the pavement before a house. He offered to shovel or wheel them into a place where they were to be laid, and was employed. He received a few pence for the labour; and then, in pursuance of the saving part of his plan, requested some small quantity of meat and drink, which was given him. He then looked out for the next thing which might chance to offer, and went with indefatigable industry through a succession of servile employments, still scrupulously avoiding, as far as possible, the expense of a penny. By this method he had gained, after a considerable time, money enough to purchase, in order to sell again, a few cattle of which he had taken pains to understand the value. He speedily, but cautiously, turned his first gains into second advantages, and thus advanced by degrees into large transactions and incipient wealth. The final result was that he more than recovered his

lost possessions and died an inveterate miser worth \$300,000.

Such a story stirs one to admiration. We cannot but have some degree of respect for the man who could, by such persevering industry, retrieve his fallen fortunes. Thrift and self-discipline are always powerful helps in the pursuit of a prosperous career. Who ever doubted that push, initiative, a keen eye for opportunities and a steady determination to turn them to account have gone to the foundation and extension of every big concern? But if for the man himself as a moral entity the process meant simply changing a spendthrift into a selfish miser, where is the gain? What matters it which of the two routes be chosen, if both end in casting rubbish to the void? To be sure John Foster's story is an extreme instance, but are not extreme instances the best beacons and danger-signals? And is it not the case that a too close and persistent addiction to worldly objects for worldly ends always had this dwarfing influence upon moral failure whether manifested in the spendthrift and for pleasure or the miser and for gold? I stand amazed that more men do not feel the empty insipidity of a life which has time only for its horizon and earth only as its arena; which has the means and materials of happiness heaped around it without power to use or to enjoy them. Is the game worth the candle? Is it wise to take infinite pains to make a tree produce a rotten apple? Success, the most wonderful and great, if gained at such a price, is it worth having? Will it bring satisfaction? Will it give the sense of having attained the highest ends possible to its capacity?

If every man's internal care
Were written on his brow,
How many would our pity share
Who move our envy now?

In Paul's letter to the Galatians there is a sentence, the suggestiveness of which is clearly brought out in Dr. Goodspeed's translation: "We were slaves to material ways of looking at things." Now that they were Christians their outlook had changed. Is there any realm in which it is more urgent for modern Christians to secure the spiritual outlook than in the matter of money? There is no subject on which there are more false notions. Money is one of our necessities. It is a good thing to have it, and a good thing to work for it, providing we do not pay too high a price for it. As a servant it is exceedingly valuable, as a master it develops the meaner qualities of human nature and makes its possessor a mere caricature. People may talk about "filthy lucre," but money is never filthy unless it makes the soul that seeks it filthy. Who could be so wrong-headed as to condemn as avaricious a young man trying to increase his income so that he may bring up his children with such conditions of refinement as he has learnt to value for what he knows they have done for himself or for others? The truth is that young people are often more in danger of putting too little value on money, and so of frittering away in trifling unnecessary expenditure sums that thriftiness might have laid by to good purpose for a future day.

Let all this be granted. Then let us resolutely face the fact that when a man like Gandhi seeks to ex-

plain the Western world to a group of fellow-Indians he tells them they will never understand us unless they remember that no matter what we say in creed or in church, money is our real God. Are we not in danger of secretly acknowledging that the money-worshipping proclivity of our Anglo-Saxon race is perfectly compatible with Christ's religion? Here is one preacher who said to his flock, "Get riches as much as you want, so long as you avoid graft and corruption." What admirable candour! Have we not heard the type of business manipulator who "has discovered the law by which every single activity of the race can be made to yield a bare subsistence to the toilers and a fortune to him"—have we not heard this kind of citizen offered as an incentive to youthful ambition in so-called religious quarters? It is impossible for the sincere follower of Christ to listen to such words without feeling that religion is dishonoured, that it has strayed from its high calling, and taken its place by the side of those modern agencies which tell the readers of their advertisements how by taking their course of lessons they may treble their salaries. This blatant worship of success for its own sake is idolatry naked and unashamed. A church that has nothing better to set before men and women has forgotten the One who said, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

If the gaining of riches is to be the standard of success, the vast majority of men and women must be counted failures. We are prone to think of the United States as the land of abundant wealth.

According to a modern American writer the Federal Income Tax returns of a recent year show that the following people had that year a total income of less than \$3,000:

4 lawyers out of every 5
8 engineers out of every 9
13 doctors out of every 14
21 salesmen out of every 22
79 ministers out of every 80
199 teachers out of every 200
399 farmers out of every 400

Since the great majority can never become wealthy, and since this fact would make this great majority count themselves failures if they had no other aim but to become wealthy, it is surely the part of wisdom to set before the mind certain considerations which inculcate the priceless possession of contentment. We cannot but perceive that such contentment sweetens a man's own life, and makes his companionship a blessing to those among whom his lot is cast.

For one thing, a man should constantly remind himself that there are better things than money. Good health is better, a cultivated mind is better, a sympathetic heart is better, a clean conscience is better. Money may provide means of enjoyment. It may appease the cravings of the appetite of sense. It may throw open such doors of society which swing on silver hinges. It may send a man to his grave in all the display of costly funeral trappings. But it cannot purchase steadfast friendships. It cannot provide the joys that never wither. It cannot satisfy the hunger of the soul. It cannot open the

doors of the human heart which swing only on the hinges of affection. In our day when the treasures of art, of literature, of science, are at the disposal of all who are able to appreciate them, in picture galleries, museums and libraries, there is really no advantage left to the rich man, save that he is in a position to acquire some portions of such treasures to be exclusively his own. Even this may be a very sorry source of gratification. If the wealthy owner of these things is intellectually and emotionally incapable of appreciating their value in no other terms than what they have cost, then he stands far below the man who can enjoy these things without owning them.

If what we have been saying brings before us the failure that looks like success, there is still to be considered the failure that is success. Here is a life marked by struggle, poverty, privation, danger, imprisonments—the life of an idealist, a prophet, a patriot of the purest, most unselfish calibre—Joseph Mazzini. In every outward respect he was a tragic failure. At the same time he left one of the most fragrant names in modern history, and was the object of such veneration as has seldom been given to a mortal.

Was he not branded with all calumny,
Because he dared to teach the naked truth?
He lived as Christ did, poor, despised, alone.
Apart with God, and working miracles,
Not on the waves and winds, but on the wills
Of men, upon the hearts of multitudes,
The hidden founts of gathering river floods
To bear one day the music of his name
Through lands of harvest to the boundless sea.

Do we not instinctively feel that such failure is the real success? Surely it is better to fail on right principles than to succeed on wrong ones. There are occasions in life when we should pray for the strength to fail. To be poor, but clean; to have fortune broken, but conscience whole; to have friends, fame, plans, failing outside, but honour unstained, principles inviolate, integrity uncorrupted—no failure inside. This is a distinction warmly to be coveted.

For thence a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail.

This was the failure of Jesus. In the face of what looked like defeat He still maintained that balance of mind which caused Him to steadfastly go forward. The contemporaries of Jesus would have written failure across His life. "We hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel." They had hoped but they ceased to hope. Jesus suffered utter injustice, but His own faith in the goodness and love of God never faltered. In the end they beat and bruised His body and finally put Him to death. Those who had a part in that transaction are today the monuments of deceit and cowardice, while He is more and more the Master of men.

He died upon the Cross he made,
Without a lip to bless:
He rose into a million hearts,
And this was his success.

A few years ago there died a man who was recognised as one of the first citizens of a great city. He was a banker, of wealth and public spirit, and a devoted friend of his university in whose counsels and affairs he had a prominent place. One who knew him well, and was competent to describe his character and career, in a memorial tribute spoke of his life as "successful." When he had written the word he paused and asked, What is a successful life? He answered that it is a life which the man would like to live over again. This seemed inadequate, for most persons would like to live their lives over again, or at least, they would rather do this than to stop living. The description was amended in this way: a successful life is one which a man's neighbours would like to have him live over again. This, again, was inadequate; for a man's neighbours would wish to gratify him if this was his desire; and all the more if there was a probability that in the repetition the life would be improved. Most men think that this would be the case, although it is doubtful if the expectation is well founded.

Finally, it seemed more rational to say that a successful life is one which a man would like to continue indefinitely in the world which he enters when he leaves this, and would there find satisfying and worth while. This larger view is essential. It is certain that our stay on this planet will not be long. This fact is to be calmly regarded. It is inevitable and should be met without fear. A man is greater than change and circumstance if he asserts his mastery. It was never intended that we should remain here. The constitution of man makes this evident.

Our thoughts and hopes are already beyond the world. We are made for a higher career.

No matter how full life has been we know it to be only partial and incomplete. No matter how rich in service and loyal in love, the finishing touches have to be added. Humboldt, when ninety years old, feeling that he had just begun to learn how to study, exclaimed, "I need a thousand years at least to do what I now have in my mind." Beethoven tells us that the symphonies which he had written were but one faint echo of the music he had heard in his dreams. Coleridge left the outlines of hundreds of volumes incomplete. Tennyson, who had given his life to writing poetry, expressed the desire that he might have a hundred years to study music, and then another hundred for art, and similar periods for science, history and astronomy.

Dwells within the soul of every artist,
More than all his efforts can express,
And he knows the best remains unuttered,
Sighing at what we call success.

No great Thinker ever lived and taught you
All the wonder that his soul received,
No true painter ever set on canvas
All the glorious vision he conceived.

No Musician ever held your spirit,
Charmed and bound in his melodious strain,
But be sure he heard and strove to render,
Feeble echoes of celestial strains.

No real poet ever wove in numbers
All his dream; but the diviner part,
Hidden from all the world, spoke to him only
In the voiceless silence of his heart.

God save us from the success which is sheer spiritual failure. God help us to live that life which attains the highest ends possible to its capacity. Then we shall hold our powers as gifts entrusted to us by Him. When we close our eyes in the twilight to open them in the eternal dawn we shall know that the only success that matters is that which takes the form of a voice within, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

VI

WORRY

PRAYER

O Christ, Thou light and love eternal, revealer of the heart of God, and no less revealer of the heart of man, we come to Thee to render our thanksgivings for all that Thou hast wrought in our lives, for all that Thou art working in the experience of mankind. May we yield ourselves to Thee willingly, and gladly, that Thou mayest use us for a fuller revelation of Thyself to the world. We would that we were more worthy of that which Thou art seeking to reveal in us. We pray that there may not be any among us who would shut Thee out of the inner chamber of his being. O Master, flood our souls, we beseech Thee, with Thy light divine, and grant us Thy wisdom, Thy power, and Thy love. We thank Thee for all experiences, whether glad or sorrowful, that have helped to make us more aware of our fellowship with Thee.

We pray for those who are tempted to the very margin of their strength. We pray for those who are weary and hopeless, feeling themselves unequal to the burdens of today and tomorrow and the days beyond. We pray for all who seem to have missed their way in life, and to be where they ought not to be, isolated, abandoned, and alone. We ask Thee, Master, to make them know that they are not alone and that no one is so unworthy as to forfeit Thy forgiveness, and that none of us is so good that Thy fellowship is a condescension. Fortify all our hearts with Thy holy comfort, that we faint not. Rest us when we are weary. Strengthen us when we are weak. Consecrate and guide us when we are calm and glad. Control and sweeten and sanctify our tears, when we are in grief. And at last, in the hour of death, when the earthly task is done, receive us to the place and service prepared for us in Thy name. Amen.

VI

WORRY

WE all know something about worry. It is one of the universal sins. It is no respecter of persons or places. It flourishes in the poor man's hut and in the rich man's palace. It thrives in the great city and in the country village. It fills the sky of life with clouds of misgivings, and darkens down existence by keeping the sun of hope in perpetual eclipse. It causes men to dwell under the brooding fear that though things are right today—health, business, friendships—they will be sure to be wrong tomorrow. It intensifies all the pains and perplexities and vexations of the present moment—severe and trying enough at best—by looking at them through morbid eyes, and then setting the imagination to work to people the future with sorrows and losses and all sorts of direst calamities.

The root idea of the Greek word which in the New Testament is translated "anxious," is a divided mind. The mind is looking two ways. It is vibrating between two attractions, and it has found no place as yet where it can settle down and be at rest. Hence the weariness caused by anxiety. The root idea of the English word "anxious" is choking. It is obstruction, distress, pain, carried over from the bodily con-

ception of it into the sphere of the mind. Under the pressure of this anxiety one becomes apprehensive, solicitous, confused; and every cloud becomes a darker cloud, and every burden becomes a heavier burden. To yield to worry is to turn evil conjurer and play all kinds of alarming tricks on one's own heart. It is to be a prophet of night rather than sunshine, of tears rather than songs.

Worry is sometimes called the disease of the age. How far it is peculiarly modern may be questioned, but the portraits and letters of a few generations back—portraits of serene faces, letters so leisurely and detached—seem to confirm the idea that it was once less prevalent. Doubtless the hustle and over-organisation of our times are somewhat to blame. It may be questioned whether any generation ever lived under such pressure, and that with all our time- and labour-saving conveniences. An American humourist has reminded us that our forefathers would wait quietly in a roadside inn for two or three days if they missed a stage coach. We, on the contrary, squawk angrily if we miss the first section in a revolving door. Never were there such inventions to save us trouble, and yet the net result seems to be a decided increase in worry. It is sometimes argued that civilised man is a nervous degenerate. "For just as we are getting our hands on the causes of many physical diseases, we are becoming a prey to psychological diseases, imaginary ills, neurotic disorders, which neither medicine nor surgery can heal."

In writing of the psychological cause of worry Dr. Orchard describes it as an irritation in a shifting area of consciousness. "A certain incident causes us pain,

a certain possibility causes apprehension, but it is of such a character that it is neither sufficient to engage the whole conscious attention of our will, nor is it sufficiently beneath our attention to sink altogether into unconsciousness. It is not a great calamity or the certain apprehension of it which worries us, yet something not easily negligible, either as an actuality or as a possibility. It therefore continually nags away at consciousness, and when it gains our attention it is almost immediately dismissed as something unworthy of concern, or something we do not want to consider. And there it stays, fretting at the threshold of consciousness like a petulant child." This able writer thinks this explanation is confirmed by three simple discoveries which each one can make for himself. It is in the hours of the night that we are the easiest prey to worry. Some trifling incident of the day can keep us awake for hours. In our working time worry produces absent-mindedness. The third cause is the distraction of many things all clamouring to be done at once, the worry of anyone whose life is largely taken up with a multiplicity of small duties.

Whatever be the true psychological cause of worry we all know it as a grim reality in our experience. Wherein lies the remedy? Not in the frequent advice: "Don't worry." That surely is as false as it is futile. Since in all worries there is a tiny bit of truth, and in some a tiny touch of conscience, it behooves us to face them squarely and to fight them in the open. Neuro-pathologists are insisting that "conscience is a psychological fact, and any attempt to suppress it in ourselves only forces it underground

where it continues a subterranean ferment which may eventually find outlet in a volcanic upheaval of personality in which the reason may be unseated." The process of smothering painful incidents is wholly bad. No battle is so worrying as one that is postponed. Some anxieties will never leave us until they are deliberately dismissed.

✓ Worry may sometimes be cured just by realizing the utter, absolute uselessness of it. There would be some justification for it were there any good in it. A party of friends were passing the inmates of a lunatic asylum. One of them remarked: "I suppose that a large proportion of these people were brought here on account of unnecessary worry." "Is any kind of worry necessary?" asked another. Just what does worry accomplish? The business is not put on a safe foundation by it. The sick person is not healed by it. The reform is not advanced by it. We moderns know what it accomplishes. Under the habit of worry the body loses its vigour, the mind loses its tone, the will loses its force, and the heart loses its resiliency and sweetness. Business men handle their business more successfully; teachers get more into and more out of their scholars; mothers conduct their households with greater ease and satisfaction; ministers perform their multitudinous duties with more efficiency, if they do not let any of their energies run to waste in worry. From Professor Winchester's life of John Wesley I quote the following: "He always rose at four in the morning; preached whenever possible at five, and was often on the road again before eight, following his morning sermon sometimes by five others in the same day, riding ten or twelve miles

between each one and the next. In the fifty years of his itinerant life, he preached over forty thousand times, an average of some fifteen sermons a week. It is doubtful whether the annals of the century can show another record of such tireless methodical activity. . . . His enormous power of work was due, not merely to his strict methodical habits, but still more to a temperament remarkably steady and self-possessed. He never hurried. He never worried. He had no wearing anxieties."

It is possible to cure worry by taking a larger view of life. We are so taken up with our own little affairs that we sometimes forget that there is a big world beyond us. And when things go wrong we imagine that the world is just a great, black, sunless, heartless sphere. A broken toy covers the whole horizon of a child's life. How pitifully we have smiled at the youngster whose heart was almost broken because of what we considered a very trivial matter. And we have learned to smile now at what we once thought were great sorrows and anxieties, because, since then, we have had a larger experience.

It is possible to cure worry by learning to live in today. So far from preparing us to overcome disaster, worry renders us unfit to meet it. It debilitates the soul and robs us of the very strength which we pray for, because we see it will be needed. To worry is to endure an agony before its time and so prolong our misery. Do not think I am forgetful. I know that coming events cast their shadows before, that one cannot laugh up to the moment when the clock strikes and the blow falls. The imagination is winged, and it flies into the future. Love thinks of

the hour of separation which cannot long be postponed, and tears tremble on the eyelids, not because of what is, but of what is to be.

Profitable it is for us to so far anticipate the effect of a given cause that we prepare to meet it. But when we have done all that can be done, it is exceedingly unprofitable to so weaken ourselves by worry that the coming sorrow is doubled in weight. As much as lies in our power—and it is a quality of character which admits of great development—we should live in today.

God broke the years to hours and days
That hour by hour and day by day
Just going on a little way
We might be able all along
To keep our spirits poised and strong.
Should all the weight of life
Be laid across our shoulders, and the future, rife .
With woe and struggle, meet us face to face
In one small place
We could not go,
Our hearts would faint, and so
God lays a little on us every day.
Never on the year's long way
Will burdens bear so deep
Or pathways rise so steep
But we can struggle on, if by God's power
We learn to bear our burden hour by hour.

The most effective cure for worry is to be found in a supreme concern for the things of God. It is not the saying of a religious teacher but it is the wise word of one of the most distinguished philosophers, the late Professor James of Harvard: "The sovereign cure for worry is religious faith. The turbu-

lent billows of the fretful surface leave the deep paths of the ocean undisturbed, and to him who has a hold of vaster and more permanent realities the vicissitudes of his personal destiny seem relatively insignificant things." Psychology has at last discovered it, and I trust when it is preached as a doctrine of science it will make an impression on some readers who at present never will believe it—*The sovereign cure for worry is religious faith.*

This brings us face to face with the familiar words of the Master: "Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life? If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow. . . . Seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow; for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Of course this is not to be taken with pedantic literality. None of our Lord's words are to be so understood. They are spirit and they are life. There is no encouragement here to imprudence or do-nothingness. We know from His general teaching that He would have us work diligently and heartily, that He would have us use all the means in our power to provide for ourselves and others. Where there is no forethought, there is no morality, no security for the family, no prosperity for the nation. To live for the present day alone is the vice of the profligate and not the virtue of the Christian. Only we must see to it that we do not carry into our work the spirit of melancholy or fear. We must not be guilty of the anxiety which will not

let us rejoice in what is, because it burdens itself with the dread of what may be.

The great lesson which Jesus would have us learn from the lilies is one of implicit and unbounded trust. Have faith in God, they keep on saying to us. So, too, the fowls of the air. The Heavenly Father feedeth them, but, as someone has remarked, He does not drop their food into their nests. From where I write I can watch a pair of parent birds making their innumerable flights to and from their sheltered home. What a busy and industrious life the birds live. Guided by unerring instinct, they are on the wing all day long in search of food. So, also, with the flowers. No whirr of spinning wheel is heard. No instrument of human toil is in evidence. But the industrial process is going on steadily and unweariedly. This is the Master's lesson—work without worry; "toil unsevered from tranquillity." No one has put it in finer language than Matthew Arnold, in his sonnet on Nature:

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity—
Of toil unsever'd from tranquillity!
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplish'd in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!
Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

If "the sovereign cure for worry is religious faith" then, be it noted, such faith cannot be developed apart from communion with God. Professor Hocking of Harvard deals with the healing and restoring influences of human life and sums up all by saying, "Worship is the whole which includes them all." Strange as those words may sound in a multitude of modern ears, they are undoubtedly true. They recall the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, "There is a little plant called *reverence* in the corner of my soul's garden, which I love to have watered about once a week." During the days of his extreme poverty James Smetham was asked why he went to church on Sunday—"To get a blessing." "And what is a blessing?" "Removal of the temptation to rage, and scorn, and indignation; a sweetness, a satisfaction with my lot; content with God's dealings. I went to church today, fretted with plenty of dark, vexing suggestions. I came away calm, sweet, fresh, all my cares gone, rejoicing in the God of my salvation, and I think no one is more happy than I. That is a blessing, and yet I know no more than I did at 7 p. m. who is going to buy my pictures, my poems, or my essays."

In one of the greatest of the Psalms we have vivid glimpses of a man who has gazed upon successful wickedness until he has become fretful and until his fretfulness has ripened into envy. The Psalmist gives him counsel which applies to all who are worried by confusions they cannot explain. This is what he says, "Rest in the Lord!" "Be silent unto the Lord!" "Be dumb *unto Him!*" The suggestion is that the man has been talking too much to God, intruding into

His presence with too much advice and complaint. The Psalmist would have him experience the blessing of inward peace, of fresh insight and broadened views, which surely will come to one through just opening the mind and heart to God, and lying still in His arms as a child falls back in a mother's arms, and letting Him calm the agitations of the mind and whisper His sweet secrets into the soul. This is surrender to the overbrooding of divine influences. It is lying fallow for enrichment. It is opening the windows of the whole nature that fresh air may pour in. It is permitting His coolness and His balm to breathe through the heats of desire. It is doing what the lily does when it gives way to the light and coaxing warmth of the morning sun. Longfellow understood it when he put these words into the mouth of Wharton, the Quaker:

Let us, then, labour for an inward stillness,
An inward stillness and an inward healing:
That perfect silence where lip and heart
Are still, and we no longer entertain
Our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions,
But God alone speaks in us, and we wait
In singleness of heart, that we may know
His will, and in the silence of our spirits
That we may do His will, and that only.

From that inner shrine of resting in the Lord a man looks out upon the clouds of mystery which, as Ruskin says of natural clouds, "fill by far the largest part of the habitable world," and he can quietly believe that in the soul there are latent powers, buried

faculties, noble possibilities, which require the school of mystery for their development. In that inner shrine a man will be restrained from feverish attempts to force the locks of closed doors for which he has no key. I mean such oppressive problems as the sufferings of a little child. What can one do in a home where a little one is lying in pain but to try to get the worried friends to "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him?" Or when called to conduct the funeral of a fair young wife whose bridal blossoms have scarcely faded away, and to listen to the voice of the desolate young husband saying, "Man, what does it mean?"—at such a time it is easily possible to add to the burden of sorrowing folk by putting into the lock a little self-made key of our own. It is unworthy of us to assume that we have an intellectual plummet long enough to reach to the bottom of that. Better say to the troubled one, "Come away and be silent unto the Lord! Come away and rest your breaking heart upon the heart of God!"

So with the mystery of evil, the mystery of pain, all the mysteries locked up in many parts of the Christian faith. I do not mean that we can do nothing about explaining them. We can see as far as we can see. But better than dogmatic and presumptuous speech is the certainty of One who is the supreme burden bearer, and upon whose mighty heart we can rest our loads. Let me close this chapter with a letter written more than a hundred and seventy years ago. Jonathan Edwards had just died and his wife was sending word to their daughter.

Stockbridge, Mass.

April 3, 1758.

My very dear child:

What shall I say? A holy and a good God has covered us with a dark cloud. O that we may kiss the rod, and keep silence! The Lord has done this. He has made me adore His goodness that we had your father so long. But God lives; and He has my heart. What a legacy my husband, and your father, has left us! We are all given to God: there I am, and there I love to be.

Ever your affectionate mother,

SARAH EDWARDS.

VII

PASSION AND POWER

PRAAYER

Help us, O Lord, to come to Thee with hearts filled with thankfulness and lips charged with praise. Thou hast enriched our lives with many blessings. Thy great mercies to us have been abundant and constant. Thy seeking hand has followed us in all our ways. Thy restraining grace has kept us back from sin. Thou hast lavished upon us the gifts of Thy goodness, and above all Thou hast given Thy Son for our life. Help us to see in Him our light and our salvation and the strength of our lives. Help us to make Him the joy of our hearts. Help us to appropriate His grace, His tenderness, His long suffering charity, His great mercy which is mightier than all men's rebellion.

O God of pity, forgive our wanderings, our misspent days and powers, our fearfulness through unbelief, our timid compliance with wrong ways, our feebleness of interest in what concerns the good of society and the progress of mankind. Forgive the self-complacency in which we sometimes linger, when we should be hastening on to things before. Forgive the self-attention which sometimes detains us from due attention to others. Let Thy mercy be upon us, and so fill us, as to bring forth within us a mercy of our own. May we experience more of the divine blessedness which is realized in living not unto ourselves. May we enter into the joy of the Master by entering a little into the spirit of His cross. May we learn of Him to be inspired with a passion for use.

Be with those who are seeking in any way to be of help in the world. Be with those who have little time to give, whose hands are full of necessary toil for daily bread. Nourish their hearts with the Bread of Life. Be with those who are set in families, that they may be unselfish, considerate, and kind. Be with those whose lot it is to dwell alone. May they know they are not alone but that Thou art with them. Amen.

VII

PASSION AND POWER

THE border-line between the sensual and spiritual is difficult to draw, though the one may drag the soul to hell and the other can lift it to heaven. A modern psychologist, conscious of the very intimate connection and likeness between things so opposite, seeks to explain the highest expression of religious emotion as being nothing more than the perversion of the sex instinct. Surely it is quite as scientific and much more reasonable to interpret the lower in terms of the higher, than the higher in terms of the lower. At the same time we cannot but express our debt to those students of psychology who have opened for us the abysses of human personality, and pointed out the dangers that lurk in repressed or misdirected impulses, especially the sex-impulse. Whether their diagnosis be altogether correct or not, we maintain that religious experience can sublimate the impulse and transmute it into a creative force for the highest personal and social well-being.

Sublimation is a word borrowed from the terminology of chemistry. Literally it means the act of refining and purifying or freeing from baser qualities. It has been called "the normal and natural means of giving expression and development to in-

instinctive energy, and of making an adequate adaptation to reality and to society." It is really a transference of basic instincts to other interests. For a long time the Christian has understood it under the simpler and more human guise of "the expulsive power of a new affection." Our contention is that "the conversion of the instincts sets free the reservoir of latent power in man's subconscious life, and opens up his personality to fresh inspirations from the life of God."

It would be a great thing for the rising generation if this truth could only be gotten home to them. The very thing which seems most dreadful, and the consciousness of whose presence as a form of temptation makes them most afraid, is a spiritual force which may be turned to great account in the service of mankind and in the building of character to the glory of God. This is a truth which should be emphasized more and more, for the average man does not believe it—does not think about it, in fact. Every vice is but a misdirection of the energy which otherwise would have produced a corresponding virtue. Why allow it to go the wrong way when a determined effort of the will could send it in the right one? As Pope says in his *Essay on Man*:

As fruits ungrateful to the planter's care
On savage stocks inserted learn to bear,
Our surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
Wild nature's vigour working at the root.

What is selfish ambition, for instance, but the desire to excell, to express one's latent soul-wealth, put to base and petty uses? We are all familiar with the

speech that Shakespeare makes Wolsey give to Cromwell, when he is bidding farewell to greatness:

Had I served my God with half the zeal
I served my King, He would not in mine age
Have left me to mine enemies.

In that speech Wolsey warned his friend Cromwell against the thing that ruined him.

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;
By that sin fell the angels.

Shakespeare often expressed the idea that even when ambition was necessary it was most dangerous. He makes Macbeth say:

I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself;
And falls on the other.

Now suppose you take ambition and baptize it with a new spirit, and give it a new meaning, and charge it with a new idea. To use the word of psychology—suppose you sublimate it. Then you have a Milton expressing his ambition to “write something which aftertimes would not willingly let die.” Then you have a David Livingstone who, after he had traversed Central Africa, said, “I am determined to go on and do all I can for the poor degraded people of the North.” Then you have a Paul—“Wherefore also we make it our ambition—to be well pleasing unto Him.” “Be ambitious to show thyself approved unto God.”

Or take the passion of jealousy. In itself it is not

an evil passion. It takes a colour for good or evil only from the motive by which it is governed or from the shape which it assumes. Wherever love is, there jealousy is possible. Jealousy is love sensitive for its own honour. We approve the intensity and fearlessness of a love which will brook no loss or insult to the one it loved. In the story of Othello, in which a master hand has traced the course of a master passion to its bitter end, we do not begin to judge Othello till his passion finds its issue first in a brooding suspicion of his wife, since

Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmation strong
As proof of Holy Writ—

and next in the rashness of a revenge in which, perplexed in the extreme, he

Threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe.

We do not blame Othello for loving too well. We blame him for loving not wisely. Love that is true to itself cannot but be jealous, cannot but desire the constancy of its object, cannot but feel, in proportion to its own purity and strength, a righteous pain and sorrow at seeing affections which belonged to itself dying or transferred elsewhere. Jealousy is the other side of love. But perverted jealousy degrades always: calls out what is worst in human nature; makes it coarse and cruel, and like another sin, "hardens a' within, and petrifies the feeling." In the

communion of Christ the unholy fire of jealousy may be sublimated into the holy fire of love.

Or, once more, take the passion of egotism. The cure for egotism is an unselfish interest in others. When we see that other people labour just as faithfully at tasks differing from ours, when we realize the effort that goes to the cultivating of their corner of the field, we shall not therefore abandon ours, but arrive at a juster, a more modest, idea of our importance in the scheme of things as a whole. To ever so many people there applies the remark which Mr. Kipling places on the lips of a German naturalist: "Mein friend, you haf too much ego in your cosmos." In other words, their outlook is unduly cramped, they are wholly preoccupied with personal matters, and everything else must give way to these. In whatever enterprise or relationship such people make uncomfortable partners, because they present far too much frictional surface.

When to such as these trials come, when some hope of theirs is frustrated, when suffering and loss visit them, they bear themselves as though no one else had ever to endure the like. In these times of wide-spread affliction religion as well as psychology exhorts us not to look each to his own exclusively, but also to those of others.

I said, all labour, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Fail I alone in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
Look at the end of work, contrast
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!

We recover our moral balance when it is borne in upon us that in the bitter thing that has befallen us we are not specially singled out. We are one with an exceeding great company of fellow-sufferers, who have to gather themselves together and proceed as best they can. This realization lifts us out of our selfish egotism and fruitless repining into the fellowship of the Cross, into that noble company whose grief has been transformed into a grace: "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as chastened, and not killed; as dying, and behold, they live!" In Marshall Mather's *Lancashire Idylls* we have the story of Moses Fletcher, the village money-lender, who had to be surprised by a seeming whim of fate—in reality by the guiding hand of God—into the discovery that in looking for once beyond himself, in a single unselfish act he could find more happiness than in a hundred business deals which caused the people he had ruined to curse his name. By looking that once beyond himself he found to his surprise that within him was a capacity for love and generosity and self-sacrifice.

We may see the same truth if we consider the individuals in whom imagination and the desire for excitement in life choose illicit ways for their gratification. In this connection I wish to quote a few sentences from the letter of a seventeen year old girl who signed herself "Child of the Devil." "I attended a business college, and while there I met a girl who was considered 'fast.' I had never associated with this class of person and she more or less fascinated me. So we struck up a friendship and went out quite a bit together. One day while shop-

ping we found a parcel, and my chum suggested that we return it to the store where it was purchased and get the money. This we did. Since then I have done everything from stealing to cashing worthless cheques. The terrible part of it is that I am not in the least bit sorry for what I have done. It was great fun. It was exciting. No matter how much I try I cannot repent. Although I wouldn't commit these crimes again, at least for awhile, I have the greatest desire to try my luck once more."

With that letter before us we have little difficulty in agreeing with one psychologist who says: "The great problem of modern times is to furnish proper thrills." Much of the lawlessness and immorality of today is caused by the search for thrills. My contact with youths who for the time being have turned to bandits convinces me that their lawlessness does not spring primarily from malice, but from the desire to break through boredom to excitement. It is that same desire, turned in another direction, which produces pioneers and explorers. Sir Walter Scott expresses it:

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

We are all alike in this respect that we live for the places where life tingles and we endure the others. The difference between sinner and saint, preacher and bandit, professor and movie actress is a difference in the experiences wherein we find our thrills.

I wonder how many have entered into the meaning of those words Paul addressed to the Ephesians.

"Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the spirit." It seems almost irreverent to suggest any kind of connection between being drunk with wine and being filled with the Spirit. Startling as the antithesis is there is something common to both which is the very ground of their contrast. These two things were linked together before Paul wrote. It was this outward likeness between these sharply contrasted things that struck the casual onlooker on the Day of Pentecost when they taunted the disciples with being filled with new wine. It was, of course, a slander and a stupid one. But there must have been something to account for it. The outward signs were similar; great gaiety of spirit, exhilaration of life, a sense of power beyond one's control, freedom and incoherence of speech as of images too crowded to find expression in words.

Why do people get drunk? For once I am glad to base my remarks not upon personal experience but upon observation. We sometimes call drunkenness a bestial sin. As a matter of fact, drunkenness is not a sin of the beasts at all. It is a sin of spiritual beings looking for escape, wanting release. The drunkard with his whiskey is looking for a thrill and so is Browning with his moments

When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones.

The drunkard fails where Browning succeeds. This is Paul's argument. Wine gives but a delusive release from life's monotony and exacts a ruinous penalty in the end. With a sort of pathetic under-

standing Paul said, Don't look for it there. You will find life genuine, you will find intensity of feeling, a sense of elation, ecstasy of being, fulness of life, by the kindling of your spiritual nature. It is here for you in the Spirit of God.

Do we find religion so stimulating? Does it kindle the lights and set the whole place aglow? If not, then let us realize that religion is not doing for us what Christ did for Paul. He filled all the chambers of Paul's being. He exalted every interest he had. He greatly and deeply satisfied him. He made life tingle with significance for him and grow rich with meaning. He did the same for Frances Willard. Listen to her: "The chief wonder of my life is that I dare to have so good a time, both physically, mentally, and religiously." The real Christians of today are living with radiancy and resiliency. This is the way of salvation for this generation. It is psychologically true that the only way in which human beings can be delivered from the vices that degrade is by finding a thrilling and inexhaustible source of interest in Jesus and the things for which He stands.

Sex passion, which has so often been condemned as something utterly unholy, comes within the category of this chapter. Let me say plainly that, so far from being unholy, it is directly or indirectly, the dynamic of nearly all the greatest achievements of the human spirit in the realm of literature and art, not to speak of sociology. Take it out of our common experience, and human life would be a poor, drab, colourless thing. There is nothing to be afraid of in this any more than in any other elemental force that rises from the profounder deeps of our being. There

is nothing unclean of itself. Every urge, every tendency, every impulse, is a vital force that may be directed to great ends or mean ones. Let every youth who reads these words understand that, and let it inspire to high endeavour. The very thing that threatens your moral overthrow, and will compass it if you are not watchful, is power, power that may be turned to grand account. Surely no youth wants that power destroyed. You want it sublimated that it may lift your soul on to spiritual heights. It will if you are careful to harness it to noble purposes and unselfish aims, just as the lightning, which will lay your house in ruins if you have no conductor, can be pressed into your service and made to light your rooms and run your machinery. This passion, directed to its proper use, is the formation of the purest and holiest function of your nature; while its perversion, despite its apologists and excusers, is destructive of self-control, forms a fatal and unnatural associative centre in the brain, and clouds the vision of the soul. All this simply because it is using for selfish and solitary gratification what was intended for nobler ends in the high purpose of God.

One cannot refrain from expressing the view that secret incontinence is much more common today than most good people would even imagine. The youth who persists in this form of selfishness later becomes deceitful, jealous, cruel, and obstinate. He may develop a very disabling feeling of inferiority, or if it already exists, have it greatly accentuated by the habit. With this goes a loss of self-confidence and an uncertain will. Fear is one of the commonest and most persistent results. The fear relates to some

form of mental, moral, or physical failure or ruination. It acts as a steady irritant and wears him out. Some of the confessions that have reached me are painful enough to read. They must have been much more painful to write.

It is a bounden duty of parents to see that, at an appropriate age, their boys and girls know enough of their own physical powers and perils to shield them from the possible effects of ignorance. The neglect of this duty is one of the most amazing factors and one of the most treacherous circumstances of the situation. If there is a false shame in speaking of these matters where the need is so great, then it must be got rid of. It ought not to exist where a Christian view of the physical and material is held. I know the diffidence which parents feel in mentioning these things to their children, and there is something to be said for deferring concern about such subjects as long as possible. But I wish I could let all parents read some of the tragic stories my clinic and correspondence have brought to light where responsibility certainly lies heavily against the mistaken modesty in which some of these unhappy victims have been brought up. One of the foundation ideas of Christianity is that God can be manifested in the flesh, so that the very body may become His temple. It should not be impossible for those who hold that faith to teach their children the perils and possibilities of their physical constitution.

To all who teach and preach let this truth be clear: give a man self-expression along the highest plane, and he will cease to desire the lower. Rev. R. J. Campbell tells of a French regiment, composed

of convicts, which was sent to fight in Algeria. "More unpromising material wherewith to do great things could scarcely be imagined, and yet this band of criminals rose to the occasion and outshone much of the regular soldiery on the battle field. How was it done? It was done by the faith of the colonel in command. He knew that men whose fearless energy had been exercised in preying upon their country might find an outlet for the same qualities in the service of that country, if only a beginning could be made. He made it by believing in them; treated them with respect; appealed to their higher manhood; gave them their flag—called it theirs, and bade them carry it to victory.

"One day an attack had to be made on an all but impregnable Moorish redoubt. First one regiment and then another of the finest soldiers in the French army was rolled back from that fatal eminence with heavy loss. At last came the turn of the scallywags. Their leader pointed first to the battered remnants of the troops that had already tried and failed, and said in a loud voice that all could hear: 'Soldiers! *your* flag must fly up yonder.' Not another word was needed. Away marched this company of burglars, forgers, hooligans, and pickpockets. Half-way up the hill their brave colonel fell dead. If there had been any doubt as to their behaviour before, there was none now. With cries of grief and anger they swept over the summit like a torrent of flame and planted their colours on the topmost peak of the enemy's fortress. Was there anything so very wonderful in this? Not at all. It was but the effect of the new

direction given to an old force under the influence of a higher spirit."

Here, then, is the great truth of religious sublimation. That which tends to lead us down may be baptized into Christ and thus become beautiful and strong. Our weakness may be turned into His strength. Christ will save—save to the uttermost—but there is something to be saved *to* as well as something to be saved *from*. Commit yourself to Him in love and faith, for all that you are to be saved to and what you need to be saved from will be left far behind as the river of your life flows onward with gathering depth and volume to mingle itself with the full ocean of God.

VIII

TEMPTATION

PRAYER

Gracious God, we come to Thee in all our need. We beseech Thee that for all varying circumstances Thine unchanging presence may be our steadfastness and strength. For every difficulty, trial, or perplexity, may we find in Thee that which the moment requires. We thank Thee for all past blessings. We would not except from our thankfulness the sorrows life has brought us, and the pains it has laid upon us. Often the wings of the storm have borne us into the heart of humanity and we have learned more from the tempest than from the haven. We would not except from our thankfulness the season of loneliness, for in that hour our pride died and we felt how poor we were apart from Thee. During future days, in all the changing vicissitudes of life, may we have a firm hold upon Thyself, which shall help us to use for the highest good all that Thou dost send.

Hear us as we pray for those who have lost their loved ones. Teach them evermore that life is lord of death and that the grave has no dominion over them. Hear us as we pray for those who have lost their faith and whose confidence has seeped away. Rekindle in their hearts some flame of truth, some passion of love, some vision of beauty, that they may believe and regain confidence and purpose and trust. Hear us as we pray for those who through sinning have lost their reputation. Thou who didst say, "Go and sin no more," have mercy upon all such today. Recover them from the pit of despair and set them once more on the highway of rectitude and honour. Hear us as we pray for those who are haunted by gloomy shadows of mistrust. Hold Thou them with Thy strong hand in these seasons of darkness. Bind them still to duty and charity, to faithful work and self-forgotten love, until through such sustained steadfastness they are brought back to hope and faith. Amen.

VIII

TEMPTATION

WE do not go very far along the road of life before we are face to face with the fact of temptation. It is one of the universal elements in our human lot. Some of us may escape serious illness and the perils of poverty or wealth, but temptation is a fact in every life. Thackeray calls it a most obsequious servant, one that will follow a man into the loneliest desert, as readily as it will follow him to church. It usually meets us along the line of our dominating passion. A careful observation of conduct will show that it makes its attack in one of two ways. We are either tempted to aim at an object or to pursue a course of action which is wrong in itself; or we are tempted to strive after an entirely right object by means and methods which are neither the highest nor the most pure. Character depends upon a man's reaction to temptation. "No man," says William James, "has matriculated in the university of life till he has been well tempted." At the outset let us grasp this one simple fact—there is no sin in being tempted. "'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus, another thing to fall." No man, as one of the old divines said, can keep the birds of passion from fly-

ing about his head; the trouble is when he allows them to build nests in his hair.

Men have sometimes expressed surprise that Jesus was tempted. It would have been a more surprising thing had He escaped. No such goodness as His could have been achieved apart from mental and moral conflict. His temptations were not only real but they must have been extraordinarily severe. I quote the language of Mark: "And straightway the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and angels came and ministered unto him." The wilderness stands for loneliness. Too often it is the despised and rejected of the graces, for at that moment when the spirit of man is directed to the fringes of the unexplored regions of his personality, he quivers with dread and turns back to the more genial environs of a busy and forgetful life. It is axiomatic that "the saints are prepared for their mission by an initial act of segregation." It is a sad reflection upon much of our religious life today that there has been no Arabia or Patmos or Carmel in it. And yet when a crushing sorrow, or the dreary unintelligibleness of our modern life, or the isolation of bereavement, lead us to an acute sense of loneliness, it is very possible for the effects upon the soul to be the reverse of what was intended. When alone we shall do well to stand alone with Jesus. In His presence we may learn that loneliness is a divine discipline for the purpose of securing and safeguarding our vocation.

It has often been observed that great minds have

been tinged with melancholy, and this is undoubtedly true. At the same time it has not always been clearly stated from whence it proceeds. No doubt there is a heaviness due to physical reasons, but this should not prevent the recognition of a shadow that is entirely due to a spiritual cause. One of Lincoln's biographers has emphasized both his loneliness and his melancholia. He explains the latter as due to "an inalienable sense of a great mission unfulfilled." Strange would it be if duties undischarged, a life purpose unrealized, did not haunt men. And it would be direct folly to try to treat pathologically a symptom which can only be treated spiritually. Any minister who takes his work seriously, who comes into personal contact with individual lives, knows that in these modern days the desert mood must be faced, the symptoms analysed in order that we may become aware of the magnitude of life's possibilities and temptation.

With Jesus in the desert we learn that mental and moral struggle often follow a time of great spiritual awakening. In the case of Jesus they immediately followed His baptism. All that the baptism meant to Jesus we can hardly understand. We cannot fail, however, to note that in this first public scene of His career He joined the motley throng who were listening to John at the Jordan and insisted that He, too, must receive with them the symbol of repentance and a new life. "It becometh *us*"—putting them all with John and Himself into one penitent fellowship—"It becometh *us* to fulfil all righteousness." After He was baptized He heard the voice of God in His own soul saying, "This is my

beloved son in whom I am well pleased." The great spiritual illumination which accompanied this identification with the sins of humanity was immediately followed by His desert experience. It was ever thus. In lesser degree it follows all great spiritual experiences. We, too, have a revelation of God which uplifts our souls. Our vision is accompanied by a call to some great task. Then the glory fades and there are lustreless days to be lived through. The immediate preparation for our task seems some piece of irrelevant drudgery. "It is one thing," as Augustine finely says, "from the mountain's shaggy top to see the land of promise, and another to keep on the way that leads thither." Then comes the desire to repeat the thrill, and the inspiration given wastes itself in a barren emotionalism. Often it ends in those perversions which, to the amazement of those who do not trace their connection, follow on the heel of genuine religious experience.

It is perhaps only over against such a vision that we can interpret the profound temptations which assailed Jesus. The commanding of the stones to become bread was a suggestion that He should use His mighty endowments to secure Himself against all material inconvenience, so that He need not suffer anything of what other people had to suffer. It was the temptation to prostitute high spiritual gifts to the service of the outer man, to make them minister to His own personal security and gratification. Many a man has succumbed to that temptation and lost his soul in consequence.

As to the prospect of winning the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, I wonder why it

has so seldom occurred to us that this was precisely what Jesus might have done had He so chosen. He was a personality such as the world had never seen before. He could have done what Mahomet did centuries afterwards. He could have become the head of a religious movement which would have created an empire. The time was ripe for it, and the advent of a great militant prophet would have been hailed with acclamation.

In a book published some years ago by a Hungarian writer, the story of Jesus' temptation is told in an imaginative way. The particular tempter on the occasion we are discussing is represented as having been Barabbas, the brigand chief, the defiant rebel against Roman authority, who years later was released by Pilate in place of Jesus at the demand of the Jewish mob. Barabbas is shown begging Jesus to come and unite with him. He says that he himself has plenty of courage, enterprise, and experience in the command of men but he has neither eloquence nor magnetism. Jesus had abundance of both, so he declares that if Jesus would only announce Himself as God's Messiah destined to break the Roman power and inaugurate a world-wide kingdom, there is no limit to the success He might achieve. In all sober seriousness this is exactly what might have happened, Barabbas or no Barabbas. We get several hints in the gospels that this was what the Master's contemporaries were longing for. They were both disappointed and exasperated with Him because He did not do what they wanted in this regard.

The pinnacle of the temple is a synonym for a uniquely privileged spiritual position. The thought

here associated with it is that Jesus can do what He likes with reference to it, and yet be perfectly safe from harm. He can precipitate Himself therefrom into any form of indulgence with perfect impunity. God's angels will guard Him from the ill consequences which would attend such an act on the part of anyone else. He may do it simply to show that He is different from other people, simply to provide the multitude with a sensation, but He will be shielded. It is the sin of self-righteousness and vain-glory that is here indicated. As with the other temptations Jesus proved Himself superior to all desire to seek special distinction for Himself. It must have been no easy thing thus to decide at the beginning of His short and tragical career. The issues presented are tremendously real, and the conflict they involved could not but be strenuous and prolonged.

In His desert of temptation what did Jesus do? For one thing, as E. F. Tittle reminds us, He turned for guidance to the great prophetic spirits of the past, the men who before His time had seen farthest into the heart of reality. To each suggestion He answered "It is written." It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. It is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord, thy God. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. "Jesus never considered Himself bound by traditional views or social conventions. . . . On the other hand, He never considered Himself free to disregard the moral intuitions, the spiritual insights of the noblest spirits of His race. In that case what had been written became

for Him a compass by which He steered His own adventurous steps."

But Jesus did something more. He got out of the desert of temptation with no blot on His soul because He stripped away the disguise from evil and saw it as the ugly thing it is. His keen moral insight enabled Him to see that evil was appearing to Him in the garments of good. To put it in the language of present day psychology, He stopped rationalizing. "He gave up all attempt to find acceptable reasons for unacceptable motives and methods." He called things by their right names—"Get thee hence, Satan!" Whatever interpretation we may choose to put upon the figure of Satan and the wild beasts, it cannot be doubted that Jesus was alive in every part of His being to a sinister influence. The choice of a lesser good than the highest good was apprehended as something to be greatly shunned. The issue was not left in doubt, for His devil was unmasked, so as to render swift recognition possible.

In the solitude of man's heart there always stands a devil. We can understand why Milton clothed him with flesh and blood and breathed into him living breath, thus visualising what was real to himself in his blindness. We despise not the shuddering horror of Bunyan because he created Apollyon and sent him breathing fire and smoke across the way, for Bunyan had engaged him in terrific combat. We appreciate the spiritual genius of Dante when in his allegory there meets him in his terrible journey the beast of luxury guised as a panther, nimble, light and covered with a speckled skin, the hunger-

mad-lion of pride, the she wolf of avarice at his heels. Let any of us go into the wilderness and we will feel the hot breath of the beasts of prey. We will see the purring lynx of selfishness, the serpent of envy, the lion of lust. We must not allow the adversary to play the chameleon there. We need not allow the wolves to appear in sheep's clothing and the wolves to be confused with lambs. Nor need we expect to be through with them when the wilderness experience is over. The three temptations of Jesus at the outset of His ministry do not really tell the whole history of His temptations. That is a wonderful word of His when He thanks the disciples for having continued with Him in His temptations. The Gospel records reveal that the temptations returned again, sometimes through His disciples, sometimes when His love for humanity seemed to cross the way of truth and loyalty to the Father.

The following is from a letter in which the writer states a problem and asks whether anything can be suggested towards a solution: "I am constantly beaten by furious temptations, which take from me for the time the very desire to resist. I pray, I read the Bible, and attend services; I know the way of life, but have not the power to live it. What I want is a power to take hold of me when I cannot keep hold of myself. A man cannot stand if in his times of great temptation his evil nature robs him of the right desire and makes him traitor to himself. I always understood that when anyone became a Christian they had the power to do right supplied, but I have found, in spite of all efforts—prayer, reading, strong resolutions, and every form of spirit-

ual exercise I know of—that temptations are stronger, more subtle, more frequent, and I am much weaker, more sinful, more degraded than I was ten years ago. Ever since I was a little boy I have heard ministers say, some of them so glibly, ‘Jesus can save you. You have only to come to Him.’ *Only!* Why cannot I find that salvation? I do not want to be told that when I want to give up all sin I can. I know that passion is wrong, but there is that in me that likes it. I have never yet been able to kill that liking. I cannot save myself. If Christ cannot force that evil out of me, I see no means of salvation, because the temptations take away the very desire to resist on my part.”

My clinic as well as my correspondence shows that this man’s problem is undoubtedly the problem of many other people. Evidently his faith does not work and he finds himself growing weaker instead of stronger. The preachers quoted have conveyed the wrong impression to his mind. Salvation by faith in Christ is not an assurance of immunity from moral struggle, but of power to prevail therein. The victory is not attained without a fight, and a long fight at that. In connection with special cases of conversion there do come tremendous uprushes of new and higher feelings and desires, completely dispossessing old ones, and remaking the whole personality. Have we not seen a man’s drunken habits fall away from him in a moment under the influence of a strong spiritual stimulus, never to return? Have we not heard of congenital defects of temper and disposition being both suddenly and radically cured in the same way? But these are exceptional

and not quite so miraculous as they appear. In most cases, I should think, there has been a long psychological preparation which comes to a crisis all at once under the action of the spirit of God. But in no case, if we could get at the facts, should we find that the regenerate soul will be spared the necessity of battling against temptation. Salvation by faith in Christ is salvation through temptation and over it, not from it. There is something more than asking Christ to take away temptation, and that is calling upon Him to reinforce our own endeavours that we may quit ourselves like men and be strong instead of living like an invalid in a darkened room shrinking from life's fresh air.

We can quite understand what this correspondent means by saying that when he is being whirled along on the torrent of temptation the very desire to do right goes from him, and he finds himself weaker and more degraded by yielding as he does. That must surely be so. An evil habit wears a groove for itself in one's nature as a river carves out its own bed in a yielding soil. But when he says that passion is wrong we must surely take issue with him. Passion is not wrong; it is just passion, and whether it shall be wrong or right depends upon the use we make of the force contained in it. Our correspondent should take himself in hand, not mainly with the object of overcoming his temptation, but of throwing his life energy into its purest and best channels. Passion is "the soul's dynamo." The great question is what are we going to do with the current it creates. Are we going to be the master of it, or will we allow it to be master of us?

To keep on fighting a temptation without doing anything else is a mistake. It only means that we are wearing the wrong channel deeper by concentrating attention upon it. Of course we have to fight temptations, but if we make that the main business of life I question if we will succeed very far. Our enemy will never leave us if we do him the honour to think about nothing but him. Moreover, this is the way Christ saves us. Only in the channels of His great service can our nature find escape from evil, by being delivered into goodness. "Victory over sin is a by-product of the life which is caught up into Christ's great love." Christ is life and health, but in the spiritual, as in the natural world, life and health cannot come in their fulness to any being who is not using them vigorously in work and service. If we live and bravely, disease and death will be unable to make inroads upon us. If we are positive in our endeavours, if we fill our souls with noble aims and generous enthusiasms, the time will come when temptations that trouble us today will be powerless to hurt us. The current of our life will be pouring like a flood along new and purer channels in obedience to the will of God, sweeping all evil from its path as a mountain torrent sweeps away all the accumulated rubbish that would turn a feeble stream aside. In the hour of temptation we may overcome as Jesus did by obeying that voice that still speaks to the hearts of men, "Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

IX

HANDICAPS

PRAYER

O Thou who art visible only to the pure in heart, and can be known only by such as love the truth, cleanse our inward minds, we pray Thee, from all insincerity and self-deception. Since Thou beholdest the proud afar off, grant unto us the spirit of humility. Since the contrite heart is Thy only dwelling, grant unto us the spirit of tender penitence. Since sin cannot dwell where Thou art, may we welcome to our hearts Thy holy presence.

We bless Thee for the beauty of the earth. We bless Thee for that which we discern and feel of Thee in bud and flower, in mountain and sea and sky, in the bird of the air, in the beast of the field. We bless Thee for Thy springs within us, the springs of love and aspiration, the passion for knowledge and truth. We bless Thee for our sustainment in strength and adequacy for the work of life, for the power to enjoy, for what we have gained in vision and wisdom, for what the years have taught us that is good, for the impulse and desire to reach forth to things before. We bless Thee for the measure of progress which time brings with it in its course. For progress among men in taste and various skill, in useful arts and appliances, in acquaintances with nature's laws and secrets, in conflict with disease, in moral discernment and conviction and in religious ideas, we bless Thy name, O God.

As we go forward into life may we become more patient, more simply faithful, more just in judgment, more steadfast in temptation, more useful in action. Efface the flaws that have marred our moral beauty. Conquer the faults against which we have striven in vain. May right principles hold sway over us. May virtues be strengthened and revived. May our unconscious influence be healthier. May our hearts be more open to all that is beautiful and true. Amen.

IX

HANDICAPS

IN a letter written in the course of his Scottish journey, Dr. Johnson refers to his birthday in these terms: "The return of my birthday, if I remember it, fills me with thoughts which it seems to be the general care of humanity to escape. I can now look back upon three score and four years, in which little has been done, and little has been enjoyed; a life, diversified by misery, spent part in the sluggishness of penury, and part under the violence of pain, in gloomy discontent or importunate distress. But, perhaps, I am better than I should have been if I had been less afflicted. With this I will try to be content."

The old man's language is tinged with his constitutional melancholy, but the student of his career will not dispute its justification. All the greater disadvantages which can darken and embarrass life were his. Obscurity, ill-health, poverty, inherited and inbred prejudice, an ill-ordered and unhappy domestic life—all were present in the cup of his fate. He was fifty-three when for the first time in his life he became possessed of a regular income. A pension of three hundred pounds from the Crown, and honorary degrees from Oxford and Dublin were

all the public rewards he received from an amount of work which in variety and quality amazed his contemporaries and moves our wonder still. At the end of his life, when his friends tried to obtain some addition to his pension in order that he might be able to afford a winter in Italy, their application was refused.

It is plain enough that Johnson suffered horribly from his disadvantages. As an undergraduate at Oxford he screened his feelings by an affectation of reckless gaiety which imposed on his contemporaries. "Ah sir," he said, with reference to those Oxford days, "I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for gaiety. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit, so I disregarded all power and all authority." He marked by capitals the famous line in his greatest poem:

Slow rises worth, by poverty depress'd.

He remembered with gratitude a few words of compliment from Warburton because, he said, "He praised me at a time when praise was of value to me."

What was the inner problem which Dr. Johnson faced throughout a long life? The problem of handling his handicaps without losing his courage. Much of the world's best work has been done by those for whom this problem was never absent. We remember that a giant of science like Charles Darwin was dogged all his life by ill-health. We remember that Spinoza, the God-intoxicated philosopher,

one of the supreme minds of all time, was consumptive. We remember that Francis Thompson, one of the chief glories of latter-day English poetry, was an ailing mortal. We remember that Beethoven, early in his career, lost his hearing and died at the age of fifty-seven murmuring the pathetic words, "I shall hear again in heaven." We remember that R. L. Stevenson travelled in search of a respite from his ever-encroaching ills as far as Samoa. Much of the great work of the world has been done by handicapped people. Reading their lives convinces us that they faced the same problem that sooner or later life forces on us all, and that they are indeed our companions in handling of limitations.

Apart from the limitations of health, there are others which we all share. There are family limitations which tie us down. One thinks of Charles Lamb as an illustration of this. He had life before him, and with every chance of a brilliant career in the world of literature, gave it all up, and elected instead a life of drudgery, the routine of which was hateful to him, in order that his much-loved sister might have a home, and not be forced to pass her life in a lunatic asylum. There are limitations connected with our occupations the routine of which demands all our attention and leaves little time for the cultivation of the things of the mind and spirit. The social and economic conditions in which so many have to live, have terribly handicapped them from the start—even handicapped them before birth in all manner of ways: by the poor food eaten, by the toil and anxiety of their mothers, by the premature closing of the mind through the necessity of

starting to earn money at an age when they should have been in school. The man who was not properly trained in his youth, whatever his natural ability, cannot do what he could had he been able to secure in his early years a more competent and efficient education. There are the limitations of temperament such as irritability. Granted that this tendency goes with such high qualities as zeal, insight, power, and is simply unusual capacity to stimulation, nevertheless it brings those handicaps that go with a loss of self-control and sets a limit to our helpfulness. You and I came into this world bound to a certain inherited condition. Born sickly and feeble, we cannot always make ourselves healthy and strong. Born dwarfs, we cannot will ourselves to be giants. Born with dull commonplace brains, we cannot force ourselves to be bright and brilliant. Born with a melancholy temperament, we cannot change it into a hopeful disposition. For good or for evil, the family, the home, the community, the church, the age, education, tradition, example, affect and help to shape the life, setting bounds which may become bonds. On reflection we are all ready to admit that

Limits we do not set
Condition all we do.

Of all these there is none that presents so constant a problem as the limitation of our knowledge. This is one of the most perplexing things in connection with our earthly experience.* We find ourselves looking into the mystery of things as a child does, and wondering what it all means. We ask riddles for

which we can get no answer, and we long for the time when the riddles will be solved and the darkened eyes be opened in the full clear light. The late Professor Huxley and some of his friends coined the word agnostic to denote the attitude of mind of those who feel themselves unable to arrive at any definite conclusions concerning some of the fundamental questions of life. The agnostic was not an atheist, nor was he necessarily hostile to religion. He was simply an enquirer who for the present felt compelled to hold his judgment in suspense on the ultimate problems of our being and destiny for want of satisfying evidence. The term is rather more loosely used nowadays than it was at first. At its inception it was the hall-mark of serious and industrious investigation into the nature of the universal order and our relation to it. But it speedily caught on, and is now widely employed to designate the rather crude conceptions of multitudes of people who scarcely ever take the trouble to think about anything. It is so easy to dismiss all great themes with the one pronouncement "I do not know," that it has become almost the fashion to do so. I question whether Professor Huxley would feel flattered if he saw the quality of some of his more modern imitators.

But there is a sense in which the word describes everybody, even the most convinced and saintly believers. We have all felt the truth of it when we tried to penetrate some of the secrets of nature. We have felt it more keenly when we have honestly faced some of the problems of actual life. Here is a man at the very height of earthly prosperity and success.

Suddenly he is laid low. In a moment his wealth has vanished, or on the point of public triumph he becomes a gibbering paralytic. Why is it that the brightest and most hopeful lives, rich in the promise of golden harvest, are cut off in the morning of their days? Why is it that those who would not harm a living creature are bowed for years under intolerable pain? Why is it that bereavement and lost health can so cloud a man's life in gloom that he is almost tempted to say with James Thomson in *The City of Dreadful Night*:

Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?
I think myself; yet I would rather be
My miserable self than He, than He
Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace.

The vilest thing must be less vile than Thou
From whom it had its being, God and Lord!
Creator of all woe and sin! abhorred,
Malignant and implacable! I vow.

That not for all Thy power furred and unfurled,
For all the temples to Thy glory built
Would I assume the ignominious guilt
Of having made such men in such a world.

Thus harassed by his limitations Thomson expressed his vehement and tumultuous soul. Thus perplexed the sensitive and deep-thinking soul raises the eternal *Why?*

We may be able to find something that will help us to face the problem of life's handicaps if we turn to a certain autobiographical picture of the Apostle Paul. It is to be found in his second letter to the

Corinthians. "And by reason of the exceeding greatness of the revelations, that I should not be exalted overmuch, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be exalted overmuch. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

There is a strong appeal to the imagination in the picture of this man, with his soaring, spiritual genius, his acute intelligence, his moral fervour—yet on the physical side below the average. His bodily presence is weak. He is one of the innumerable exceptions to that doubtful rule which proclaims that a sound mind resides in a sound body. His physical organism was constantly exposed to humiliating infirmity which left him prostrate, abjectly weak, like a man who has been knocked down by a succession of pitiless blows. We do not know what this thorn in the flesh was. But it meant that life was handicapped. It was some bodily weakness which is only referred to as a stake driven through the flesh. It interfered with his work and was a drag upon life's wheels. It seems to have hindered him making a good impression at the outset. It made it difficult for him to command a hearing. He had to win one. He had to fight this bodily defect and win his way to the souls of men by the intensity of his enthusiasm, the wonder of his experience, and the sheer brilliance of his intellect.

For one thing, we are struck with the fact that Paul does not whine or rebel or waste his time in self-pity. That is surely an important point to grasp. Though he was painfully conscious of his handicap and though he could not fully explain it, he rose triumphant above it. I have read the autobiography of a woman who started life with the terrible three-fold handicap of being blind, deaf and dumb. Today she writes with charm, culture and delight in living, her mind stored with the world's best and choicest thought. She entitles one of her books, *The World I Live In*, and a happy world it is, but has not Helen Keller made it? The more I read the letters of the perplexed the more I feel that what we call the Dark Ages had no monopoly of superstitions. It is amazing how widespread is that fantastic notion that men and women are launched into a world which they have to take as they find it—a world which shapes them, and makes them, and perhaps dooms them, without their being able to affect the result in the slightest. We have already admitted that an enormous number of things are determined for us. We did not choose our race or parentage, with all its inheritance, nor our abilities or disabilities, nor our country or schooling, or the religious influence under which we grew up. A good many of our opinions, when we come to examine them, are merely the opinions of our circle, and not at all original with us. Yet these opinions govern nine-tenths of our life and actions. We remember the story of the lady who said with a sigh, "I accept the universe," and Carlyle's grim comment, "Gad, she'd better!"

It does look as if the world is what it is, and does

as it likes with us, without asking our leave. And then we remember the story of Arthur Kavanagh. As a result of some accident of prenatal development he was born with four little stumps instead of arms and legs. With a courage above description he resolved to overcome his handicap. His achievements as a boy and youth are almost beyond belief. To crown them all he was elected to the British House of Commons and for fourteen years represented there his Irish constituency. He makes us think of the words of Professor William James: "As a rule men habitually use only a small part of the powers they actually possess, and which they might use under more difficult conditions. It is evident that our organism has stored up reserves of energy that are ordinarily not called upon, but that may be called upon."

The world as we find it is powerful, but it depends upon ourselves how we are going to react under its stimuli. Influences are playing upon us from all quarters, but it lies with us how we are to respond, and to which of them we will respond. Just as man cannot change the laws of nature, but can discover their action and make the elements his servants, so it always rests with us to decide what to do with circumstances. I like the vigorous language of a modern writer: "To man alone of all living beings has God communicated something of His own nature, making him not only a creature but a creator as well, with powers over the shaping of his destiny and the world's." There is something in the human soul that can rise superior to limitations, that can subdue them and use them and through

them attain to better things. We easily make too much of the circumstances in which we live our life, and do our work. They do not really and deeply affect the quality of a true man's life. Here are the words Admiral Peary addressed to an assemblage in London shortly after his return from his famous expedition. "For twenty-four years, sleeping or awake, to place the Stars and Stripes on the Pole had been my dream; and now, awake or asleep, alone or in a crowd, I can face myself and say, 'I have made good.' Has it come by luck? If you will pardon the egoism, I will say, No. I made my opportunity, fighting it inch by inch and yard by yard, out of that hell of cold and darkness in the North, and I have made good." Proud words to be sure, but surely there was just occasion for pride. It was a triumph of sheer courage and perseverance over the most appalling difficulties. How small and even contemptible by the side of such an utterance sound all the apologetic references one hears on the part of those who are condescending to their limitations instead of turning them into opportunities.

All will agree that the writer of this letter has started life with a severe handicap: "When I was fifteen years old I discovered that I was an illegitimate child. I was brought up in wretched surroundings, with a drunken man and woman whom I took to be and, in a sense, loved as my parents. They died. When I came to realize what I was I longed to die. To feel yourself continually despised, to be afraid that your secret should leak out! Oh, the horror of it all! Is this the will of God? Can you throw any light on this hellish subject?"

All will not agree that the writer of the above is facing his handicap nobly. I suppose there are still people who would despise him because of his birth, but why should he adopt their view? No one worth troubling about would do so. There have been very great men who were of illegitimate birth. There was Henry M. Stanley, who won the applause of the whole world, and yet his real name was not Stanley at all. There was Alexander Whyte of Edinburgh, whose pulpit was such a centre of spiritual power, and yet he was the son of an unmarried mother. Our friend of the above letter should not allow our laws and society's opinion to regulate his self-respect. As for the will of God, it has not received a perfect expression in everything that comes to pass. What I understand to be the will of God is something that is never done until man does it. The will of God cannot be expressed in things or circumstances, but only in the highest possible use that man can make of them. God certainly allowed this man to be born as he was. But His will in the matter will only be done when the man concerned turns what is adverse in that circumstance to the victory of the spirit. And he can. He can be great and good, not in spite of this, but because of this. The fact is that things are nothing; their real significance is in what can be done with them.

If we come back to Paul's experience with the thorn in the flesh we may learn that handicaps have a real spiritual significance. Paul felt it had been given him that he "should not be exalted overmuch." In other words, Paul felt that his handicap was permitted to keep him nearer to humanity. It

may be, as Geo. A. Gordon suggests, that when Paul began life he needed to have the pride taken out of him. "His joy in existence consisted largely in his sense of superiority to other men. This weakness shut him in from the great life of humanity. God found the proud man upon his poor perch and brought him down to the sense of equality with the humblest of his kind." This leads him to recall Browning's great words in *Paracelsus*:

I want to be forgotten even by God.
But if that cannot be, dear Festus, lay me,
When I shall die, within some narrow grave,
Not by itself—for that would be too proud—
But where such graves are thickest; let it look
Nowise distinguished from the hillocks round,
So that the peasant at his brother's bed
May tread upon my own and know it not;
And we shall all be equal at the last.

Paul's handicap, like ours, had another significance—the significance of spiritual achievement. "Power is made perfect in weakness." Somehow in the economy of God these handicapped souls are able to do something for us that others cannot do. All who know the story of the Brontë sisters, with their persistent struggle with sickness, and weakness, with poverty and discouragement, with cramped and sordid surroundings, will realize that Anne at least knew something of Paul's secret. As one has said, "There is heartbreak in her words, but the light of the resurrection morning is not far away."

I hoped that with the brave and strong,
My portioned task might lie;

To toil amid the busy throng,
With purpose pure and high;
But God has fixed another part,
And He has fixed it well;
I said so with my breaking heart,
When first this trouble fell.

These weary hours will not be lost,
These days of misery,
These nights of darkness, anguish-tossed,
Can I but turn to Thee;
With secret labour to sustain
In patience every blow,
To gather fortitude from pain,
And holiness from woe.

If Thou should'st bring me back to life,
More humble I should be,
More wise, more strengthened for the strife,
More apt to lean on Thee:
Should death be standing at the gate,
Thus should I keep my vow;
But Lord! whatever be my fate,
O let me serve Thee now!

There is no other way of touching the good with glory. That which makes Christ Christ is the Cross. I have heard it said that the task of Jesus in His most trying hour was not so hard as yours and mine because He knew for certain what lay on the other side. That is not true. He shared the limitations of our knowledge. God did not allow Him to fail. He bore Him triumphantly through the dread experience which has seated Him on the throne. Christ's power was made perfect in weakness. This, in their degree is what God is now doing for all handicapped souls who give themselves to His service. They need

envy no man his honours and rewards in this world. They would not give them a moment's thought if they knew life as it is from the side of the Eternal. Had the sailors of Columbus prevailed when their fears prompted them to go back, their commander would have been unknown to history. But Columbus kept them at their posts and presently out of the mystery of the Western ocean arose the new world. Let us keep at our posts in all our weaknesses. The ocean of the future may seem nothing but a weary waste of seething water, but the Commander of this ship is more certain to find a new world than was Columbus.

X

SUFFERING

PRAYER

O Lord, our God, because Thou hast inclined Thine ear unto us, we shall call upon Thee as long as we live. We thank Thee for the aspirations in our souls that the world can never satisfy: the soul is greater than the world. Forbid that we should seek to rest in anything unworthy of our kinship with the highest. We thank Thee for all the drawings of Thy great mercy, for the light of Thy love that shines from Thy face to attract us to Thyself. We beseech Thee that all this wealth of divine love may not be flung away on us or by us. Help us to yield ourselves to Thee, that our hearts may be enlarged, and that we may live in a larger world of love.

We ask Thee to show a Father's love and pity toward all who especially need Thy help. Succour those in distress and weariness. Give cheerfulness to the downcast and despondent. Show a plain way to those who are in doubt and perplexity. Remove the darkness from the sorrowful mind. Help those who have lost their faith in earthly aid to find all that they need in Thy comfort and guidance.

We pray for those who have somehow missed the road and do not know how to find it again. May they be led gently and kindly back towards the eternal life. We pray for those who are in any way disturbed or in trouble about the things of this world. Help them to see things in a truer proportion, with the thought of the Eternal before their minds. We pray for those in whose lives there has been little but friction, disappointment and defeat. Give unto them the realization of a divine companionship and a compensation for all that is withheld in human intercourse or fails to satisfy and uplift and inspire. We offer our prayer in the spirit of Jesus. Amen.

X

SUFFERING

WHY include suffering among the modern problems? My correspondence answers the question. The problem of suffering has evidently troubled hundreds of those who have written to me. It has not troubled them all in the same way. How is it that if God is really all-loving, there is so much pain and misery in this earth? Why is it that even those who endeavour to serve Him, who seek thoroughly to do His will so far as it is made known to them, how is it that they are sometimes condemned to live through years of disease, and to be more unfortunate than those who make no profession of religion at all? How is it that we have all the misery upon earth which is associated with war? How can you hold to a belief in a just God in the face of the unequal distribution of wealth, the haphazard visitation of good or bad fortune?

This is the Earth that God made.
These are the Timber and Coal and Oil
And Water Powers and Fertile Soil
That belong to us all in spite of the gall
Of the Grabbers and Grafters who forestall
The natural rights and needs of all
Who live on the Earth that God made.

These are the Corporate Snakes that coil
Around the Timber and Coal and Oil
And Water Powers and Fertile Soil
Which belong to us all in spite of the gall
Of the Grabbers and Grafters who forestall
The natural rights and needs of all
Who live on the Earth that God made.

These are the Parsons shaven and shorn
Who tell the workers all forlorn
To pray for Contentment night and morn
And to bear and to suffer want and scorn
And be lowly and meek and humbly seek
For their reward on the Heavenly shore,
But not on the Earth that God made.

In one form or another the problem has vexed a multitude of people I have come to know, and perhaps every one who reads these words.

There are good reasons why we feel the pressure of a question which offered little difficulty to the thought of other ages. The popular understanding of the story of evolution as unfolded by scientific research has increased our estimate of the suffering of the lower creation, extended as it has been to unimaginable periods during which the process which has secured the survival of the fittest has been in operation. No line of Tennyson's has stuck in our minds more than "Nature red in tooth and claw," though it is quite an unfair description of Nature. The rise of humanitarian feelings has contributed still more to the problem. Suffering was once inflicted upon human beings as a sport and a spectacle, by savages on their captives, or in the shows that made a Roman holiday. But the hearts of men

have been softened until today it is widely questioned whether we have the right to make sport of the sufferings inflicted upon animals by the hunt and in other ways. It is also probable that the nervous organization of modern man has become more refined and delicate so that pain is now felt more acutely. It is certain that the quickening of the imagination produced by education adds tenfold to pain through anticipation.

The early Hebrew Scriptures bring before us what might be termed a very simple theory of suffering. Sometimes we are amazed to discover that it is not entirely displaced from the minds of people today. There are many of the Psalms, many passages in the Law, and even in the Prophets which teach that righteousness brings happiness and prosperity and that misery and suffering are always the result of sin. We are brought face to face with this theory in that great drama, the book of Job. There we have the cry of an inspired soul who felt that the old Hebrew explanation did not explain. There we have the picture of the righteous man who nevertheless loses all his outward prosperity and is smitten with a loathsome disease. His friends bring to him the orthodox explanation. He argues against them, and goes deeper into the problem until he gives their theory a flat denial, that the unrighteous were never lastingly prosperous and that the righteous were always prosperous. He has to struggle through to find some larger expression for faith, and a larger comfort in the suffering he could not escape. In the end he attains a fuller experience of God and learns that

power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone.

There are several solutions of the problem of suffering offered to us today—solutions that aim at reconciling man with his lot. They have been expressed in beautiful poetry and convincing prose. And yet they have failed to console. They have not prevented the spreading abroad of a very general scepticism of goodness, a poisonous cynicism and a very bitter pessimism. The most prevalent is what Newton Marshall calls "the solution of the optimist" and by an optimist he means "one who regards the universe as so constructed that everything in it is radically good." Pain is balanced by joy and there is always a proper compensation paid for every woe which life inflicts. Browning is the chief exponent of this solution, and his name is all that is necessary to suggest the strong conviction with which it is held. He says in *Abt Vogler*:

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence,
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue
thence?
Why rushed the discords in but that harmony should be
prized?

Far be it from us to take away any of the consolation that can be given, but it is doubtful if we can be helped by such a doctrine as this in itself. Does it help us to be told that we must have sorrow if there is to be joy, and that discords rush in

for the sake of harmony? If that be true it means that evil is just as much a fixed and ineradicable element in life and eternity as is good. It means not only that every pain we suffer will be compensated for by some good, but also that every joy we have we must pay for by some suffering to come. It means, indeed, that we must take our pleasures sadly as the sure forerunners of disaster. It means, as Newton Marshall puts it, "that pain can only be dissolved by the general dissolution of all existence, and that the Buddhist is right who substitutes Nirvana for heaven and extols spiritual suicide as preferable to the ways of more abundant life." We do not conclude that there is no truth in this outlook. On the contrary we shall show later on that the truth it contains is only to be found when faced in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The philosophical explanations with which we bedeck the stern facts of life do not alter their harsh outline. It seems to me that modern men and women prefer to face these facts rather than have them explained away. They are engaged in a poor business who offer consolation to suffering souls by telling them that their infirmity or disease is a kind of mysterious present from an all-loving God. How can one talk of cancer as a mysterious present from God? I can see God in the scientists who are studying the subject with the object of stamping it out, but not in the thing itself. And to be frank, I must confess that I am not helped by that increasing number who say that there is no such thing as disease and pain; that they have not an objective reality but are entirely subjective. If suffering is a

nothing, it is a strangely positive, potent nothing, with all the qualities of a something. After making due allowance for the effect of mind upon matter, as I have sought to do in another chapter, we must not overlook the fact that whether pain be an objective reality or a subjective thing, it still produces the same effect. Cancer is there, whether it is an objective reality or whether it is simply the thought of cancer. There is just as much difficulty in explaining how the thought came into being as to show how the objective thing came into existence.

Christianity does not say that everything is good. Christ Himself never told men to accept disease as though it was a mysterious present from God. He sent His disciples out, not to lecture the sick, not to make them passive and resigned, but to get them to look to God as the source of all health and life, the great Healer of all the ills of body, mind, and soul. The whole spirit of our faith is not as though Christ were telling us passively to accept things as they are. Christ brings a stirring challenge to the souls of men to overcome and transform these very things.

That last night at the supper, in the presence of the symbols of His own sacrifice, Christ summed up His life by saying, "I have overcome the world." His religion had made him a triumphant soul and had created in Him a victorious life. That is the real function of all genuine religion. It did not mean, even for Jesus, that He had a comprehensive explanation of everything, but it did mean that He had risen above life, had been superior to it, had won a triumphant victory in the face of it. Here is

a letter from one who surely has the right to question life: "I am seventy-four years of age, and I find myself utterly unable to explain the following situations. In 1895 my wife, sick with melancholia, took her own life. In 1901 my eldest son died of a fever. In 1920 my eldest daughter shot herself during a fit of mental depression. In 1924 my only living son and his two small children were burned to death in their own home. My question about life can be summed up in a single word: Why?" Does any honest man profess to have a satisfactory intellectual answer to that? In the presence of such a problem one can hear Jesus say, "My God, Why?" One can see a new meaning in the words of Paul, "At present we only see the baffling reflections in a mirror."

Towards the close of his life Robert Louis Stevenson wrote from Samoa to George Meredith, "For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness; and, for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, having been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on, ill or well is a trifle, so as it goes. I was made for a contest and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle. At least I have not failed, but I would

have preferred a place of trumpeting and the open air over my head." The hold which Stevenson has upon our hearts is largely due to the fact that although he never got a satisfactory explanation of his sufferings, he surmounted them, got on the top of them and drove them instead of allowing them to get on the top of him.

Dr. Bruce Taylor recalls an incident of his early ministry in a little village in the uplands of Ayrshire in Scotland. It was an isolated place. The people had been hand-loom weavers, and as the hand-loom disappeared before the power-loom, they had fallen into great distress. Underfeeding, intermarrying, and lack of knowledge, had contributed to the spread of tuberculosis, and the young people died like flies. One old widow, who had seven in her family, had, when Dr. Taylor knew the neighbourhood first, but one child left, a daughter of twenty-three. She, too, sickened and struggled, and died. The morning after her death the minister went down early before breakfast to ask after his old friend, fearful as to whether she could have borne up against her distress. As he rapped on the door a cheery voice invited him within. "Come awa' in," she said, "I ken your foot." He entered and explained that he had lain awake thinking of her, wondering how she had carried her sorrow. She was busy at the moment, blackening her fireside with a brush, and she turned around and said, "My laddie, dinna you fash" (Don't you trouble yourself), "I'm abune masel," (I'm above myself). The minister comments thus: "It was the finest thing I ever heard

and it came from an old woman, almost illiterate, upon whom there had come sorrow after sorrow."

In the earliest account of Christ's experience in Gethsemane Mark tells us that when He entered the garden "He began to feel appalled." Why appalled? We cannot feel that the explanation is a natural shrinking of our Lord from death. To be sure, the more highly organised any being is the more is he sensitive to pain. There are bodies to which a rough touch is more painful than a spear thrust to others. A musician is tortured by a discord unnoticed by less refined ears. Thus all pain must have been more intense to Jesus than to others. His physical organisation unblunted by deviation from natural ways, undrugged by excess, was capable of a range of feeling as vast in anguish as in delight. It was not merely the thought of crucifixion that caused such agony of mind. Such weakness would be unworthy in contrast with many a martyr who has gone triumphantly to his cross, and many a hero to whom death was as welcome as the sight of sky and stars to prisoned men.

There must be something more than this to cause Him to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. I find that a satisfying suggestion of E. F. Tittle that "Jesus had staked literally everything on the belief that there was at the heart of the world a magnificent, unfailing love. . . . And it seemed to be crumbling! He who had done no wrong was about to be crucified. Did He feel appalled because His thought of God as Heavenly Father seemed to be slipping away from Him and He found Himself face downward, wrestling with a great mystery?" As

soon as Jesus faced the facts of a difficult situation He was able to make the necessary adjustment, and when He made that adjustment His calmness and courage were sublime. He may have to sweat blood, but His soul knows no surrender. He may cry out, "My Father, Thou canst do anything. Take this cup away from me"; but he also prays, "Not My will but Thine be done," and leaves the Garden master of Himself and of the world.

Let us seek to learn that the most precious truth in the garden of suffering is the divine Fatherhood. We can exercise every freedom in our speech with our Father. The cup may be hateful to us; it may unnerve us; it may make us afraid. The part of wisdom is to show our fear to the Father. We are in error if we think that we are irreligious in the expression of our dread. We are unwise if we secrete our fears.

We see a sorrow rising in our way,
We strive to flee from the approaching ill,
We seek some small escape, we weep and pray,
But when the blow falls then our hearts are still.
Not that the pain is of its sharpness shorn:
We find it can be borne.

It can be borne in fellowship with God. To bear the suffering the world brings without that is impossible for man. Heart and flesh would fail. Many over-strung, nervous souls have brought disaster to themselves by attempting to carry the burden alone. By shutting out God they are shutting out more than they know. We need to remember how much Christianity owes to an initial concern at pain. Mod-

ern religious tendencies hasten away from what is felt to be morbid meditation on the physical sufferings of eternal love. There are elements of right in this refusal to make the sufferings of Calvary a matter of wounds and thirst and blood; for the real sufferings of Christ were deeper than that. But there is also no doubt that these sufferings were factors in wakening men to the deeper agony of which they were external signs. The New Testament holds still the tender horror which that event produced, in such phrases as the "broken body" and the "precious blood." A distinguished critic of Christianity has professed that it would have been his main concern to see that Jesus had died comfortably in bed. He has not considered, apparently, that with that end to Christ Christianity would never have come into existence. It was the cross with all its accessories of shame and suffering which first woke men to the spiritual issues at stake in the sacrifice of Christ.

This has filled Christian history with an amazing kind of life story. Are we not all familiar with the story of people who have made a poor start, weakened by wrong-doing, narrowed by selfishness, spoiled by aimlessness, embittered by trouble? But that is only the beginning of the story. See them now on the top of the world, ask their secret and they will tell you of One who suffered on a cross and thus revealed to them an eternal mercy from which they could not escape until the victory had been won in their lives. Let any man meet that Christ, fall in love with Him, be chastened and subdued, forgiven and empowered by Him, and he will experience that victory which overcomes the world.

XI
PLAY

PRAYER

O Lord, make us to know that every thought Thou hast toward us is a thought of mercy. Help us to realize that we live embosomed in Thy power, and that every noble impulse of our being has its source in Thee. May we smile to think Thy goodness flows around our incompleteness, round our restlessness Thy rest. Let us be brave and not cowardly, humble and not fearful. Let us reverence ourselves and one another. Let us work at our work as those whose calling is sacred. Let us study to keep mind and spirit pure.

Be with us in the various intercourse of life that our behaviour may be true. May nothing of evil be encouraged or provoked by us in any. May the better nature of each be aided and drawn out by our touch. May no cynical minds be able to infect us with their tone, no impure or uncharitable ones to depress us to their level. Be with us in health and strength that we may make the best use of them. Be with us in sickness and pain that these may not be without secret ministry to us.

Help us, we beseech Thee, to be concerned for the cure of the evils that we witness around us. Grant that all efforts for the benefit of mankind may be guided to success. We pray for reconciliation wherever there is estrangement and division; for the calming of angry passions that tend to warp the judgment and blind the eyes; for the growth of a mutual spirit that shall conduce to understandings, and to the re-knitting of broken relations. Turn our deserts into an Eden such as Thou delightest to walk in. Exalt the valleys of our depression. Bring down the mountains of our pride and vanity. Make that which is crooked straight and that which is rough plain. Free us from prejudice and foolishness, and with earnest heart and mind may we ever do Thy will. Amen.

XI

PLAY

THE old proverb which says, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is really an embodiment of human experience. We may take it as a fact, from the constitution of our natures and of life, that we all stand in need of play. We are all capable of being happy. If we have the capacity for tears, thank God we have the capacity for laughter. Play comes to meet that great capacity. That the joyous side of our nature plays a vital part in life, every day's experience will teach us. Like everything else, it may be abused. Its abuse may mean the weakening of moral fibres and an impairment of our usefulness. Nevertheless we emphasize its importance and in so doing hope to establish the thesis that one of the crying modern needs is for the spirit of play in all our daily pursuits.

We have an illustration in what is taking place in the world of education. I do not know how far my readers' minds can go back to school days, but I can recollect the time when it was considered the proper thing that school life should be intolerably dull. The one maxim was this—you must not under any consideration make the boy happy in his school; if you do you are introducing pleasure. Well do I

remember the dreariness of school life. Almost the only flash of joy that came to me in those days was when I got out to play football in the field. The recollection of it brings to mind the rule that prevailed in a certain school in the United States in 1872: "We prohibit play in the strongest terms. The students shall rise at five o'clock summer and winter. Their recreation shall be gardening, walking, riding and bathing without doors, and the carpenters', jointers', cabinet makers' or turners' business within doors. The students shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls play. Let this rule be observed with the strictest necessity; for those who play when they are young, will play when they are old." Likewise I recall that a learned man in Europe proposed that "a young girl should never play; she should weep much and meditate upon her sins."

But there is a mighty change taking place in the whole atmosphere and character of our education. Men are beginning to realize that there is no reason why knowledge should not be conveyed in a pleasant and attractive form. So today you no longer find the school-boy "creeping, unwillingly, like a snail to school," as Shakespeare represented him. He goes with a buoyant step, and returns from school with a happy face. In passing through some of our kindergarten schools I have been struck with the happiness of the children's faces and the joyousness of the atmosphere generally. And from that we learn a lesson—that play is necessary to human life at large. In the practical philosophy of life, if you can make men happy you tend to make them better. A dull, dreary existence, drudgery of life

and work—that draws men downward and destroys their capacity for goodness. Make men happy and you will help to make them better and their work better.

Is it not true that most of the world's best work has been done in the spirit of play? John Bunyan found it so:

Well, so I did; but yet I did not think
To shew to all the world my pen and ink
In such a mode; I only thought to make
I knew not what; nor did I undertake
Thereby to please my neighbour; no, not I;
I did it mine own self to gratify.

Louis XVI gained more pleasure from his lock-smithing than from all the pleasures of Versailles. Why? Because at his lock-smithing he was really at play. Salisbury found more enjoyment in his laboratory than in his Prime Ministry. Why? Because in his laboratory he was at play. Every healthy function yields us pleasure. All our best results in history, in language, in architecture, in music, in preaching are attained when we work with the exuberance of play. Had Lord Grey carried the same spirit into the responsibilities of high office that he manifests in catching fish with rod and line he would have found them less burdensome.

We are all familiar with Millet's picture *The Angelus*. There are two peasants, a man and his wife, standing in the field where they are toiling. In the west we see a temple with its spire. It is eventide. The sun is sinking, and out from the spire of the sanctuary there sounds across the field the an-

gelus, and when those peasants hear it, they uncover their heads, and in the fields they bow in prayer. But there is a beautiful significance in that Millet has made the light coming from the setting sun to fall upon the wheelbarrow and the spade. There is the church, there is the worshipper, and there is the spade—and the illumined thing is the common implement of toil. I am suggesting that we shall never see the common road as the highway of the Lord until we walk it in the spirit of play.

This is of vital concern to all who are interested in the spread of religion. It is a strange thing that the tradition of the Christian religion should be in favour of dulness and gloom. Mohammed had drunk deep of the sorrows of mankind, yet "Mohammed," says a Scottish professor, "had that indispensable requisite of a great man, he could laugh." The laughter of Luther was notoriously boisterous. Sir Alfred Lyall says that the laughter of Tennyson was triumphant. Lord Roseberry has reminded us that our chief debt to Charles Dickens was that he taught us to laugh again. Few men more Christlike have ever walked this continent than Phillips Brooks. In an extraordinary degree he had "the deep wisdom of fine fooling." Into whatever circle he came, he carried with him the infection of his buoyant temperament and his exuberant spirits. His coming was always and everywhere the signal for an outburst of joyous hilarity. He would tell those who were inclined to be awed in his presence that it was great fun to be a minister. An incident is recalled which tells how, when Phillips and his brother, the one rector of Holy Trinity, Philadelphia, the other

rector of St. Paul's, Cleveland—were spending one of their holiday Sundays at home, when their spirits became rather too uproarious, the anxious mother put her head in at the door through which the mirth proceeded, saying "Boys, remember it is Sunday!" It is the easiest matter in the world to cite numbers of great religious people who were notoriously happy souls—such as St. Francis, who seemed to have a song in his heart, or Henry Drummond who was conspicuous for a certain brilliant gaiety.

In contrast with all this why should George Herbert say "My Saviour banished joy?" Or here are the words of no less a preacher and scholar than A. B. Davidson: "Did it ever strike you that Christ never was a child? You do not fancy Him a child like your children, gay and free of concern; He was grave, retired, and sad. He moved about with a weight upon Him. It is not anywhere recorded of Him that He smiled. You can hardly fancy that He ever looked young." Where did that conception of Jesus come from? Certainly not from the Christian Gospels.

Men said of John the Baptist that he was a fanatic, that he had a devil, that he was sullen, sombre, inhuman. Of Jesus they said: "Behold a winebibber and a glutton." To be sure it was a lie, but what lay behind the taunt? Answer that and we have a vision of the real Jesus as men saw Him. His enemies are bearing witness to the fact that He was not ascetic and austere. He was no Baptist shunning the pleasant intercourse of men. He was genial. He was seldom alone. On the mountain, on the sea, in the city, there was always some one with Him.

When He seeks the desert the crowds follow Him—they cannot keep away. He declared that His attitude to society was as far removed from John's as a wedding is from a funeral. I piped and ye did not dance, he mourned and ye did not weep; I am the piper calling to mirth, just as John is the ascetic calling to separateness and seriousness. John was the last of the prophets, a man of the Elijah temper; Jesus was more than a prophet, He was the Son of Man. John wandered—

A phantom among men, companionless,
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell.

Jesus was the brotherly man, the friend even of publicans and sinners.

When the complaint was made that the disciples did not fast, Jesus defended them in a phrase of rare significance, "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, so long as the bridegroom is with them?" There is something singularly alluring in the joyousness of these words. By the bridegroom He evidently meant Himself. "The children of the bridechamber" was a title which might be applied to any of the guests or members of the bridal procession at a Jewish wedding. He meant so to describe these disciples about whom the question had been asked. It was an answer very much to the point. So long as He, the Bridegroom, was among these friends and guests of His, life was by no means a gloomy thing for them. For the Master's followers to fast while He was among them would be as much

out of place as for a bridegroom's friends to wear sackcloth on his wedding day. Of course it is true as Canon Farrar says, "We are never told that Jesus laughed, while we are once told that He wept." I cannot but feel that that is the wrong conclusion. His tears are mentioned because they were the real departure from the ordinary. It is the expected thing that takes place with most unexciting regularity. Thus everyone noted it when Jesus wept. But His gladness was the constant tone of His life and did not need a chronicle. I am not suggesting that we should forget that Jesus was the man of sorrows, but I am protesting against the common impression that He moved in a parade of gloom.

Think of the joy of Jesus in children. Childhood among the ancients was a disregarded and, in most cases, a far less happy period than it is with us. Thus the only thing we know of the childhood of Seneca is that he had a tedious illness. Our knowledge of the early life of Jesus is restricted to one incident and a few details. Now, in some things Jesus seems to have accepted the conceptions of His times. In most things He transcended them. Certainly His attitude to children was delightful and unconventional. The average Rabbi was far too pompous and dignified to be loved by children. We cannot imagine them climbing on the knee of Annas and demanding that his reverence should play games with them. But no one can read the Gospels carefully without feeling that boys and girls were drawn irresistibly to Jesus. I imagine them demanding of Him stories and expecting Him to listen to all their

childish prattle. I imagine Him romping with a crowd of them.

One may be a good man, and yet, from some fault of temperament, may not be attractive to children. But it is very doubtful whether you can be a good man if little children are not attractive to you. Certainly they were attractive to Jesus and that fact alone should reveal to us the buoyant radiancy of His personality. There is a beautiful modern picture which Mr. Moody kept in his office at Northfield. It is the Master blessing little children. But it is not the old-fashioned, familiar thing with the little children gathered about His feet, with one—the most beautiful of them all—up in His arms. No, they are at play. There is one quite near the Master kicking a football, and the Lord is looking on them with delight and He is saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

From this we pass to notice something deeper. What was it that made Christ so happy? What were the secret springs of His joy? There was the joy of giving, the joy of a pure heart, the joy of confident trust. But there is another and it is the deepest and strongest of all. Jesus was so happy because He was so heroic, because He saw life as a thrilling adventure that called for daring, insight, ingenuity, leadership, and all high qualities. There is a verse in the New Testament which says that Christ calls us "by His glory and virtue," and the word translated virtue is the noble word which means "manliness," "valour," "high courage," "great-heartedness." It is because this aspect of His character has been overlooked that the Master is misunderstood by some. He

was "meek and lowly," we recall, and we take that as indicating a certain softness or timidity in Him. He was "non-resistant," we say, and we take that as meaning that He was yielding and pliant. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. But He was not caught like a sheep, and dragged by violent men against His will. As W. P. Merrill says, "The force that led Him was within His own soul. The likeness to a lamb was in that He did not complain, or protest. But that very fact is an indication of reserve strength. It takes a strong man to be silent under injustice." He stated the case in noble words: "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself," words which set one thinking of Stevenson's epitaph,

Glad did I live, and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

Much of the unhappy religion in the world is due to the failure to see that religion is thus calling us to and fitting us for a heroic, adventurous handling of life. Christianity as Jesus saw it, and talked about it, is not that which certain evangelists have been too apt to make of it, a scheme whereby one may be cared for, kept safe, shielded from life's perils and hardships. Jesus played the game but He never "played safe." He flung Himself into the struggle with a keen zest which was like a divine fire in His veins. And He did that, not that He might save us from thus throwing our lives into the fight, but that He might inspire us to the joy of moral combat. Too

much of our Christian thinking contains the idea that struggle with temptation, wrestling with the hard facts of life, bearing of burdens, facing problems and thinking them through are all part of a discipline through which we pass as best we may, for the hope of a future joy that will come if we are faithful. To be sure that is true, but the finer truth is that with this very conflict with life is our joy. Have you the inspiration of a happy religion? If not, ask yourself how far you have entered into the way of high adventure? Have you dared anything for God? Have you staked anything valuable on your faith? Have you ever faced life as a game, determined to play it with hope and courage? This is the faith that means the joy of victory:

To thrill with the joy of girded men,
To go on forever, and fail, and go on again.

Unhappy religion is always religion with something wrong in it. Much of it is due to low physical vitality. When people are weak physically they are apt to be gloomy religiously. Another thing that produces unhappy religion is thinking of it in terms of petty rules and regulations. This religion is very uninspiring to watch, and must be miserable to practice. It is a long sea mile away from knowing God who is love and beauty and truth and goodness as well as the source of all true inspiration. In this connection I desire to quote a paragraph from the letter of a business man: "At the risk of boring you, I want to say a few words about how things have reshaped themselves for me during the past

few years. When I tried to live by the set of rules handed to me, the spiritual life was stale, flat, and unprofitable. The idea seemed to be that, if I was passively receptive, a supernatural power would fill my being and make my eyes to shine. Nothing happened. I lived dully by a sense of duty, kept my thought on myself, and was not happy. The new motive power is entirely different. I call it the life of the Spirit, and it lives not on Sundays alone, but every day, and makes business, tending the baby, and shifting ashes a bubbling joy, because I see that eternity is only an infinite series of one-minute periods, none of which can be longer nor fuller of opportunity than this one. As a factory manager, my object is no longer to make rules, but to furnish enthusiasm. This is not a theory, but a practical success." Here is a man who has experienced genuine religion. He has a song in his heart, gaiety in his spirit.

The men who met him rounded on their heels
And wondered after him because his face
Shone like the countenance of a priest of old
Against the flame about a sacrifice
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad was he.

Just how much we need this kind of religion is brought home to us when we read a book like *The Great American Bandwagon* by Mr. Charles Merz in which he attempts a picture of contemporary American life. He contends that his countrymen are an adventurous, pioneering people but the frontier is gone. The wild animals are all killed off. The Indians are protected on their reservations. So life has

become drab and tasteless. And he traces the ways in which his people try to put the romance, the tang, back into it. He refers especially to the secret societies with some ten million men and women enrolled in them—"the Maccabees who meet in hives, the Red Men who meet in tribes, the Watchmen who meet in forts, the Prophets who meet in grottoes, the Owls who meet in nests, the Eagles who meet in aeries." He enumerates the "rapidly growing secret orders, the Beavers, the Lions, the Serpents, the Roosters, the Orioles, the Deer, the Geese, the Goats, the Bears, the Moose, the Elks, the Buffaloes," and says: "Here is John Jones, a plain bank teller of 211 East Fourth Street. But here also is John Jones, on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 11, a Sir Knight Errant of the Mystic Order of Granada." The treasurer is not a treasurer; he is an August Keeper of the Strong-Box. "All over America, six nights a week, from one to five million men and women dress up as Brahmins, pharaohs, vikings, princes, hermits, druids, Galahads, sorcerers, Maltese and Tibetans. Life is drab, so men play Indian."

It makes us painfully conscious of men's need of the One who said "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it to the full." A man doesn't go on collecting pebbles when he has found the Pearl of Great Price. If men could but be convinced that the Christian life is not a narrow and impoverished thing they would embrace it. They do not yet know that Christ transforms personality and introduces to the causes most worth serving. Genuine religion is the life of God in the soul of man.

This life Jesus imparts, by the gift of His own personality, to all those who come into loving fellowship with Him. This life means a bigger and more wonderful universe in which to live. This life means an infinite and an almost unrealizable enrichment. The world will never guess it unless we live, as his biographer says Dwight L. Moody lived, with "immense, exuberant relish."

XII

CYNICISM

PRAYER

God our Father, the fountain of love and every kindly thought, we come to Thee that we may have our hearts enlarged and our sympathies deepened and all our human interests increased and sanctified. Only in Thy presence do we partly forget ourselves and find an entrance to a larger world of love everywhere. For all that is and all that breathes are Thine, and every soul upon the earth is a child of Thine. Take them all into Thine embrace.

We thank Thee for the tenderness of fathers and mothers, and for the joys and delights of the little ones. Guard the children that come up from the gates of the morning. Let no perverting harm fall upon them in their early days. Save them from wrong instruction, from evil example, from anything that would turn them away from Thy purpose for them. Bless the teachers who guide them, and the parents who have their more constant training. Steady the boys and girls amid all the distractions of modern life. Keep their self-respect unsullied and their consciences tender. Save them from anything that would hinder their service of Thee in the years ahead. Be with the mature in the floodtide of manhood and womanhood. Help them to keep a cheeful temper and a trusting heart. If they are prosperous may they not be spoiled, if they are disappointed may they not be crushed. Teach them that loyalty to eternal things is far better than the gainful success they must leave behind. Support the aged who, as they grow older, find that they are growing lonelier. Dispel their loneliness with the spirit of eternal life, the spirit of exultation at the prospect of going home to Thee for ever. Establish them in their reclining years and give them a triumphant welcome on the other shore. So do Thou encompass us in all our varied needs, ever assuring us that Thou art our refuge and that underneath are Thine everlasting arms. Amen.

XII

CYNICISM

THE mental life is bound up with the moral. For convenience in discussion you may separate the two in thought, but they are really inseparable. Men may fancy that they can work in the dry light of abstraction and theory, and that the intellect can reach its conclusions apart from the movements of the conscience or of the affections. But no man can ever become as mechanical as a calculating machine. The mind proper receives a healthy tone or the reverse from the moral and emotional life. One of the things that threatens most to vitiate and spoil the intellectual life of today is moral cynicism.

We may not be aware of the awful prevalence of this tendency until we stop to think about it. It does not force itself on our notice like intemperance or self-indulgence, but it is none the less injurious to the finer instincts of men and women. It manifests itself in a depreciation of high principles, a contempt of high ideals, a scorn of old truths and a supercilious attitude towards self-denying habits of life. There are many breeds of cynics. Some disgust at once by their foul language, their swaggering ways and their disreputable jocularities. These, however, are not the most dangerous. You can see that

they have fed on garbage, and your purest instincts make you shrink at once from their company.

The most dangerous class is composed of those who insinuate their doubts and denials in cultivated language. The modern Diogenes does not live in a tub, and is not clothed with rags. He is an educated and eminent member of society. His accents may be decidedly refined in tone. But he has lost his simple, primitive love of right and justice. He is a kind of Mephistopheles who believes that every man has his price. He has no essential belief in manhood and womanhood. Nothing robs the mind of its bloom so readily as cynicism. There is a fine instinct in favour of truth and right which is to the mind what the bloom is to the grape. How beautiful that instinct is and what a pity to rub it away by unnecessary friction. A little flavour of the caustic gives relish to social life, but save us from the man who is nothing but a walking mustard-pot. The earliest symptoms of cynicism are not very severe. They have more the air of fun and ridicule than anything else. But we have to decide what subjects shall or shall not come within the circle of our laughter. Contempt should be reserved for things and persons contemptible.

There can be little doubt that cynicism is one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of religion. Says Dr. Fosdick: "Our failure to recognize moral cynicism as our chief enemy is responsible for the fact that much of our preaching goes wide of the mark. We often preach as though we had on our hands some Robert Ingersoll with his lusty agnosticism, whereas what we really have on our hands

is H. L. Mencken splitting his sides laughing at us. We frequently talk as though we were trying to save religion from Tom Paine, whereas Tom Paine is long dead and what Christianity faces is Lothrop Stoddard and his cynical gospel that we are the people, and his contempt for lesser breeds. We continually talk as though we had to construct theoretical arguments for religion, whereas what the people are reading is Sinclair Lewis having a riotous time burlesquing religion and putting an inconceivably vile rotter into the Christian pulpit. We attack skepticism when our most popular and powerful enemy is cynicism and, as another has said, cynicism is the devil."

One of the earliest cynics on record was the devil in the Book of Job. "Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, 'Doth Job fear God for nought?' " "To be disinterested," says Amiel, "is to be strong, and the world is at the feet of him whom it cannot tempt." Satan, however, would have us believe that no man is beyond temptation, because no man lives who is disinterested. He is here the spokesman for all these moral cynics who assert that nothing good is ever done for its own sake. There is always an ulterior motive. If people live virtuous lives it is because they have selfish ends to serve, or at least because they find it pleasanter to be respectable, and consider that it pays to do right. "It is easy," says a modern cynic, "to be virtuous on so many thousands a year." The insinuation, of course, is that the virtue would disappear with the income, that, in fact, but for the income there would be no virtue, and if vice

could be shown to be more profitable the man would prefer it to its contrary.

There are, we must admit, many examples of this gross utilitarianism whose perpetual question is, What is there in it for me? Such persons are wholly indifferent to the public good, scornful of the struggles of the race, cynical of the enthusiasms which have made men great and good. On the other hand, there are multitudes of people—plain, inconspicuous, ordinary folk, whose whole lives bear the stamp of a different creed from the cynic's, and whose history continually refutes the sneer that every man has his price. In spite of cold and calculated warnings not to expect too much from human nature, nor to put too much trust in man, we may still glory in the fact that the age of heroes is not dead, and that self-sacrifice is not yet relegated to the land of dreams. There are those who are not deterred from the service of their fellows by the fear of losing their own chances in helping a world which will forget to thank them. The earth is not peopled by individuals who, having lost their own enthusiasm, now spend their days in affirming that the only wisdom is to let the world go to the devil in its own way. There are multitudes who would rather a thousand times be beaten in the right than succeed in the wrong. The charge which the cynic makes, that no man serves God from disinterested motives, is really a reflection on the heart of him who makes it. It shows a person lacking in reverence for human nature.

This I have against the creed of cynicism—it destroys faith in one's fellow-man. When the cynic tells me there are rogues and knaves in the world,

that there is cruelty and treachery, unkindness and deceit, envy and malice, hatred and all uncharitableness, I must agree with him. Any morning's paper bears testimony to the accuracy of this diagnosis. But let us stop a moment. Why do these various crimes and misdemeanours find their way into the public press? For this one reason, that they are exceptional occurrences. Some years ago a witty Irish-American writer who called himself Mr. Doo-ley coined the epigram, "Sin is news, and news is sin." It sounds very cynical but is in reality the very reverse. Sin, for all that it is so old, always strikes us as news, which means that it is a real departure from the ordinary. Good behaviour is too commonplace to get the smallest paragraphs. It is the facts that do not get into the papers—the kindness, dutifulness, self-denial, courage, faith-keeping, right-doing, loyalty—that make up the unrecorded ninety-nine per cent. This is no argument for the perfection of human nature. I know too much about it for that. But I do assert that human nature is better by far than the cynicism of the hour represents it.

If we desire to see how wrong the cynic's view is, how distorted is the vision which regards man in this low way, we have only to contemplate the manner of Jesus. It was His way to look at the noblest traits of character, and to elicit from the meanest of men and women much that was high and lovely and of good report by the simple method of believing it was there, and acting on the assumption. There is a great word of Arnold of Rugby. He says: "Whenever I find that I can receive a new boy into my

school without emotion, I shall know that it is time to be off." That is to say, whenever I can receive a new boy into my school without feeling the divine significance, I shall know it is time to be off. Whenever I can look upon my brother man, even those fallen farthest down, and not perceive the potential son of God I shall know it is time to stop calling myself a Christian. The cynic expects the break, he takes it for granted that the fall will come, he believes that the fall is the natural thing, the thing the man was made for. Jesus is not surprised at man's best moments, He expects the act of purity or love, He counts the best the thing we were made for, the worst the unnatural thing. He knew and knows now what is in man, the heights and the depths, the piteousness and the possibility. He knew the worst. He hoped the best, and for that divine hope He poured out His soul unto death. Faith refreshes and sweetens life; cynicism stains it with the poison of despair.

Cynicism not only destroys the recognition of worth in others but it takes the bloom from off the world. No poet has done more than Wordsworth to express this sense of loss. Once "meadow, grove and stream" were "apparelled in celestial light," but now:

'The things which I have seen I now can see no more,
'The rainbow comes and goes, and lovely is the rose.
'The moon doth, with delight, look round her when the heavens
are bare,
Waters on a starry night are beautiful and fair,
'The sunshine is a glorious birth, but yet I know where'er
I go
That there hath passed a glory from the earth.

Faith widens a man's outlook, lifts life to higher levels, stamps things divine with a new meaning. It exalts our conceptions of things near and afar, quickens and purifies our aspirations, unlocks the doors of bandaged faculties. Faith clarifies our vision, puts us in new relations to life and the ends of life. In the language of Keats, "new planets swim into our ken," and old planets beam with a new light and glow with a new splendour. We have experienced "faith sublimed to ecstasy." There is a new wealth of meaning in everything, in stars and flowers, in swelling seas and running brooks, in all the laws and activities of nature. Faith has a wonderfully expansive power. Through it we climb out of our murky environment, and reach tablelands to which our God Himself is sun and moon. Faith does all that and that is what cynicism destroys.

Cynicism destroys the spiritual interpretation of man. We have been reading what certain chemists have told us about the average man. He is five feet ten inches high and weighs 150 pounds. He is composed of enough fat to make seven bars of soap, enough iron to make a medium size nail, enough sugar to fill a shaker, enough lime to white-wash a chicken coop, enough phosphorus to make 2200 match tips, enough magnesium for a dose of magnesia, enough potassium to explode a toy cannon, together with a little sulphur. The chemists assure us that these chemical elements can be purchased for exactly ninety-eight cents. That is what a man is made of! And yet he seems to have the witness within himself to the greatness and grandeur of his being. He possesses or is possessed by a mighty ca-

capacity for dissatisfaction, for restlessness, for loneliness, a capacity too for aspiration, for longing. His brain is a hive of inventions, his hand a worker of wonders, his memory gives permanence to his acquisitions of knowledge. He is the master and interpreter of nature, the possessor and ruler of the lower tribes. Ninety-eight cents' worth of chemical materials cleverly put together by nature does not seem to be an adequate explanation of Isaiah or Dante, of Paul or Shakespeare. It surely makes a difference whether we shall accept the cynic's definition of man as "gaseous vertebrate" or whether we shall think of him as a child of God.

Cynicism takes away the sense of God's reality. In Thomas Hardy's poem entitled *The Funeral of God* you have an illustration of what I mean. These words appeal to many because to them God has ceased to be a living reality. He has largely faded out of their lives. He can no longer be kept alive.

I saw a slowly stepping train
Lined on the brows, scoop-eyed and bent and hoar,
Following in files across a twilit plain;
A strange and mystic form the foremost bore.

O man-projected figure, of late
Imaged as we, thy knell who shall arrive?
Whence came it we were tempted to create
One whom we can no longer keep alive?

How sweet it was in years far hied
To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer!
To lie down liegely at the eventide
And feel a blest assurance He was there.

That "blest assurance" is for many destroyed by the materialistic naturalism of the hour. We can at least respect Bertrand Russell for his honesty. He denies God's reality and lets us see the consequences: "Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day."

The atmosphere of cynicism is never the atmosphere through which you can clearly see yourself, your brother man, the world or God. Only on the heights of hope, with the winds of God blowing in your face, can you know things as they are. A famous preacher whose voice is now still, has spoken of a spectator who in a dingy cellar of the city under the oppression of a narrow dwelling, watching the last moments of some poor mendicant, finds incongruity and perplexity in the thought of an eternal state. But he declares that were he transplanted to the mountaintop, with the plains and streams beneath him, the difficulty would vanish in an instant. Atmosphere and horizons are liberators and teachers of the soul. What is the alternative to an atmosphere of hope? I know of only one. The opposite of hope in our day is not doubt, it is not even despair, it is cynicism. It is the atmosphere which distorts, obscures, makes grotesque rather than pitiful this earthly lot of ours. Cynicism is the prisoner of human hearts; it is the foe of progress, it is the death

of sincerity, it is the enemy of mankind. It distorts the good which it cannot destroy. It is a denier of Christ and His invincible Gospel of hope and faith.

I take comfort in the truth pointed out by E. F. Tittle that the cynics of this world have always been wrong. He recalls how they said that religious freedom was not to be thought of because human beings were not wise enough to be entrusted with it; how they declared that dueling was inevitable because human passions were too quick and violent ever to submit to the slow processes of the court. They likewise declared that negro slavery was inevitable, that business was business, that economic and moral values do not mix, that business need not be bound by moral considerations. And Mr. Tittle reminds us that today we have religious freedom, that the most of us no longer attempt to settle our individual disputes by drawing a sword or firing a pistol, and that we are discovering when you attempt to divorce business from morality the result is a tragedy not only for morality but for business. Yes, there is comfort in remembering that the cynics have always been wrong. "Cynics always start by posing as hard-headed wise men, and they always end by being soft-headed fools." The glowing annals of science and art, of human industry and enterprise, of noble sacrifice and true religion are but the records of the dauntless victories of those hearts no cynicism embittered.

The sin of cynicism, like the sin of contempt, is the sin of the superior person. Sometimes it manifests itself under strange disguises. It is a hateful spirit wherever it is found. It may infest socialists

as well as capitalists, professors as well as business men. But it is most ugly when it is seen amongst Christian workers: "Grace pride" is what a quaint old preacher called it. It is the self-importance of the Pharisee who contrasts himself with other religious men less earnest in piety and less strict in conduct. Dr. Alexander Francis has recorded how while he was resident in Russia a certain social worker from Chicago begged to be introduced to Tolstoi. At their interview the American described his methods of rescue work in the slums of that city: "We go down to the drunkards and harlots and try to pull them up to the rock on which we stand." "And then," continues Dr. Francis, "the storm that I had seen gathering burst upon the astonished man. 'You miserable creature,' said Tolstoi, more in sorrow than in anger, 'do you know that your heart is full of Pharisaic pride, and that it was upon such sins of the spirit and not on sins of the flesh that He whom you call Lord and Master poured the vials of His wrath? Will no one organize a mission of drunkards and harlots to save the souls of the clergy and social workers who, by their secret sin of spiritual cynicism, of swelling pride and petty meanness, by their bitter jealousies and narrow sectarianism, are kept out of the Kingdom into which the open sinners enter, saved as by fire, yet saved by the grace of Christ in them, manifesting itself in the humility, the charity, and the self-loathing of their hearts?'"

There is a remedy for cynicism. First of all it must be discovered, for it hides itself very skilfully in the depths of the heart. When it has been discovered it

can be destroyed. There is a power that can transform this evil. It is nothing less than the true vision of God as He really is—the Eternal Father of all the sons of men. Here is a man delivered from its curse. Note his language. "It pleased God to reveal His Son in me." There is not a grain of the cynic left in him. A proud, exclusive, cynical, contemptuous, persecuting Pharisee, has been transformed into a humble, self-effacing, brotherly disciple, going through the world blessing and helping others. Let a man open his heart to that vision and his outlook upon the world is changed. Life starts from another point. Whatever faults of character may cling to his lower self, one thing he will not be—a cynic. Let a man walk in company with the radiant Christ, who above all had reasons for being cynical about His fellows, and he will keep his conscious mind a sacred place for God. It will be golden with gratitude, redolent with love and cleansed of self-will. His daily prayer will be that he may send no thought into the world that will not bless or cheer or heal, that he may have no aim but to rise into a higher sense of Christ's life and love.

XIII

FREEDOM

PRAYER

We pray to Thee, our Father, not as to an awful, distant, inaccessible potentate, but the soul of all our good and the life and inspiration of all our spiritual striving. We lift up our hearts to Thee, thankful that we can know the fountain of our blessedness. We beseech Thee to help us, that all our desires and seeking after good may ever be turned to Thyself. Surely it is in Thy heart that all the love we know dwells. It is from Thy hand that all the gifts come that gladden and enrich us. It is Thy wisdom that must make us wise. It is Thy righteousness that shall make us pure. Satisfy us then, we beseech Thee, and even in the process kindle within us new and larger desires. Lose not care of us when we lose sight of Thee.

Our God, we thank Thee for the greatness and sublimity, the sweetness and gladness of life. We thank Thee for our individual share in its precious things, for we are all richer in our spiritual than in our material possessions. We thank Thee for those sweet experiences that we would not forego for anything that the world could give. We are grateful for all the humble everyday things in which the poor are as rich as the richest. We know that we have come short of our privilege in this respect. We have closed our eyes to the heavenly light. Forgive us, we beseech Thee, and grant us to be more than conquerors in all our ill through the might of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Grant us an assurance of which no evil can ever deprive us that Thou art the deliverer and consolation of those who put their trust in Thee. Dig out of our hearts all the dread that comes from selfishness. Let us be assured of Thy forgiveness and go on our way rejoicing in the fellowship of Jesus Christ. Amen.

XIII

FREEDOM

FREEDOM is one of the watchwords of the younger generation. They are constantly telling us that they intend to be free. They sweep aside old traditions of custom and opinion in their determination to control their own lives and to have their fling. Without wasting time in lamenting this very legitimate desire, we are anxious to make sure that the younger generation understands the significance of the word so frequently employed. There is no more inspiring word in human speech than *freedom*. In fetters the heart cannot beat true—man cannot fulfil the end of his being. To reach that, he must be free. We recall the words of Carlyle: "Great is the moment, when tidings of freedom reach us; when the long enthralled soul, from amid its chains and squalid stagnancy, arises, were it still only in blindness and bewilderment, and swears by Him that made it that it will be free. . . . It is the deep commandment, dimmer or clearer, of our whole being to be free. Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at or unwisely, of all man's struggles, toilings, and sufferings, in this earth."

The greatest boon for which nations have fought and struggled has ever been freedom. What has been

every nation's history but a struggle against tyrants and oppressors? When a nation loses freedom it loses everything. So we read in Scripture of the struggle of the Jewish people for independence, and the crushing sorrow of bondage. "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows." The supreme tragedy of the Jewish people was the tragedy of their violated freedom. "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow," the captive city of Jerusalem is pictured as saying to all that pass by. So we read of the great struggle of Greece for freedom against the might of Persia. When Greece lost her freedom she lost her real life. "'Tis Greece but living Greece no more." Rome in her greatest days was free. Her evil days came when she was enslaved within by the tyrants who wrought her ruin. Scotland had her bitter struggle for freedom. Bannockburn expressed the determination to perish rather than accept chains. In our generation millions of men went forth to die because they believed the hateful spectre of an all-entangling tyranny was spreading its network over the world. Here again, as in so many other cases, the poverty of the achievement does not deny the greatness of the desire. It was for freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, that Erasmus, Galileo, Milton, each played his part. It matters not what be the field, the heart of man cries out against every form of tyranny. It may be the bondage that enslaves men's bodies, or that

worse bondage that tyrannises over men's minds and souls.

When, therefore, the younger generation assures us that they are going in for freedom they are using a word with a very wonderful history. What's more important, they are expressing a desire to achieve the very end for which they were made. God made us for freedom. The spirit of God is a free spirit, not merely in the sense that it works freely, but also in the sense that it works freedom. As men are subject to the influence of that spirit, so they become more truly free. God's grace never coerces, it pleads, it persuades, it strives to draw men into partnership with the divine purpose; but it never coerces. God might have made us machines of goodness, so that we would turn out goodness as a machine turns out its product. Or He might have made us slaves of goodness, always doing right because we could do no other and because we were compelled. God might have made us like matter running in its predetermined courses, or like planets keeping to the particular tracks marked out for them. Nothing so demonstrates man's superiority to the rest of creation as his ability to choose. What God evidently wanted was not machines but sons and daughters. And so God made us with a margin of liberty, and even more truly for freedom.

What then is freedom? It is not an easy question to answer. Plato wrote the five books of the Republic that he might answer the question, What is justice? He wrote the five books creating the ideal state, because he said somewhere there in its entire relationships justice would be found. And if it was

not easy to answer the question, What is justice? equally is it not easy to answer the question, What is freedom? I think we will all agree with Dr. Fosdick when he says: "Freedom is not something you can pick up from the street corner or possess because you chance to claim it. Nor is freedom obtainable by the negative process of breaking through restraints and jumping fences. Freedom is a positive spiritual achievement. . . . To take charge of your life and to be free means the intelligent substitution of inward self-control and self-direction for outward restraint, and that is a great achievement."

The real slavery is the inner slavery. The man who is free within is free indeed, even though outwardly he may be restrained.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage:
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

It is the bondage of the will that creates the real slave. The sensualist is sometimes called a rather free liver. Is he free? He cannot control his thoughts. When we were children we used to amuse ourselves or be amused by taking hold of the handles of a toy electric machine. When the machine was made effective there was a point at which we wanted to let go, and could not. The machine refused to release us. It is a picture of the lack of freedom that besets the

man who gives over his will to evil. He is no longer master of himself. Conscience should control the will, and the will, enforced by conscience should control the passions. Conscience disobeyed brings at first a sense of the shadow of subjection. You know when you disobey that it will be less easy to obey next time. You can see the shadow of slavery moving over you. When we have once closed our ears to conscience we fail to see moral distinctions. Conscience cannot make a noise in the ears of the man who is spiritually deaf.

Some of you, I doubt not, have visited the *Castle of Chillon* on the Lake of Geneva. You remember that in that castle is a dungeon containing a well, at the bottom of which you can discern the waters of the lake. That shaft is called the "way of liberty." In the old days the jailor in the darkness of the dungeon would whisper to the prisoner, "Three steps and liberty," and the poor dupe hastily stepping forward fell down this shaft, thickly planted with knives and spikes; the mutilated corpse dropping into the lake. That is precisely the liberty of sin. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Freedom most certainly means self-direction and self-control. Otherwise it comes to mean in the figure of one of the old saints, putting on spurs, but no bridle to ride a fiery horse. By all means let us accept the truth in the emphasis modern psychology puts on self-expression. Only let us remember that the soul never really expresses its true power until it is disciplined. Nations and individuals must choose between the life of self-indulgence and the life of

discipline. Therefore it is a mistake to suppose that all the time that can be spared from work may be safely given to thoughtless enjoyment. The pursuit of mere pleasure is self-defeating. Whenever recreation quite loses its true character as a refreshment after work, it becomes vulgarised and spoilt. It either becomes professional—and some of our finest games are being spoilt in this way—or it turns into dissipation. It relaxes instead of bracing. Freedom means a great deal more than a negative conception of unrestraint.

The Apostle Paul was a sincere advocate of freedom. His letter to the Galatians is one of the great charters of Christian liberty. It is a precious document because it is born out of the deepest experience of his soul. We are permitted to see something of the process which made him value freedom so much. He was brought up in the atmosphere of a stern legal system. The Pharisaic home into which he was born, and the system of instruction in the Rabbinical schools, put the emphasis on the purely formal side of religion. It is quite clear that he was a conscientious youth. He wanted to do what he learned to be right. He paid attention to the minute details of the law with wonderful exactness. And yet he could not fulfil all the demands. The more he tried, the more burdensome and annoying they were to him. Out of it all he eventually emerged into the clear light of the revelation of Christ. Christ gave him freedom. Christ emancipated his soul from that tedious bondage under which it had chafed and struggled so long. It was like coming out of a close atmosphere into the pure freshness of the sunlight.

The Christian calling was to him emancipation. It sent him forth saying, "With freedom did Christ set us free." Christ appeared to him as the liberator, the emancipator. Gladly could he have sung

He came to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgression
And rule in equity.

Note this fact. Paul was never free until he was mastered by Someone worthy to rule. It sounds like a paradox but it is one of the sublimest truths of the spiritual kingdom. It is true in science. Says Huxley, "Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever nature leads, or you shall learn nothing." It is true of music. It yields its secret to the soul only as we give it a chance with the soul, surrender ourselves to it, wait upon it as a disciple waits upon a master. Then its strings cry aloud our ecstasies and its trumpets voice our triumphs. It spreads abroad in our troubled souls its vast healing power. It is true of religion. This was what Principal Forsyth was thinking about when he said, "A man's first business is not to find freedom but a master." Even freedom itself must be mastered by moral and spiritual passion if it is to be a powerful friend instead of a great enemy. In this realm Jesus is the Master. He who acted like the servant claimed to be the master. It was after He had performed the menial task of washing men's feet that He declared unto them: "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye

say well; for so I am." It was after shifting the centre of gravity for the moral realm with new beatitudes that He said that the wise man building upon the rock was the man who did the things He told him. It was after declaring His love unto them that He told them they were His friends if they kept His commandments. When Paul accepted Him as Master he went out into life's experiences talking about the glorious liberty of the children of God.

When Paul was mastered by Jesus his conception of freedom was broadened. He was led to recognise the nature of man as social. "Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, *but by love serve one another.*" Freedom does not mean everybody doing as they like. It is that spirit that creates anarchy and strife. That is not a call to liberty, but a consent to license. The man who begins by doing as he likes usually ends by not liking what he does. Nor does liberty mean that everybody should do as he likes so long as he does not interfere with the rights of others. Robinson Crusoe on his island was not an example of true freedom. He could do what he liked all day long without interfering with the rights of anybody else, but that did not constitute him a free man. In very truth he was cribbed, cabined and confined. Crusoe began to be a free man on the day when he saw a footprint in the sand which told him that there was another human being there.

A recent writer has defined liberty as "organised relationships in a purposive whole." Some writers seem to delight in that sort of definition when the same thing could be said in a much more human

fashion. At the same time it is a definition that is moving in the right direction. It implies that liberty is to be found in a social whole. Man cannot alone be free. He finds freedom in his relationship to his fellow-men, in a purposive whole. Would it not be simpler to say that freedom is self-realization? One is free in so far as he is able to be himself, to live his life. The claim of the young person today, "I must live my life," is a quite justifiable claim. It is essentially the claim of liberty. Every person is free in so far as he is true to the law of his own being. We talk about being as free "as the birds in the air." The bird is free so long as it is in the air, in its own element, fulfilling the law of its own life. But clip one of its wings and it becomes a poor fettered thing of the earth. The Bishop of Lincoln puts it this way: "God is everlastingly free. No freedom can be more complete than the freedom of God. And yet if we could speak of God as being in the universe, we should have to confess that God was the most law-abiding being in the world. He never denies Himself, never contradicts Himself. He is always true to the law of His own being, and is always everlastingly free. You are free in so far as you are true to the law of your own being."

What is the law of our being? The Christian should know the answer. The first Christian law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If a man obeys this law he can say with Augustine, "Love and do what you like." If you love you cannot do amiss. Such love is the higher law of the soul. Not the love which is to possess and enjoy, but

the love which is forever giving of itself. This is the divine purpose and we are free in so far as we are true to it. We know something about it on the plane of common experience. If a man really loves his work, his art, his music, his study—whatever it may be—every activity in life is enhanced and he begins to live as never before. It is life for him, it is himself. He is beginning to be free, to enter into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, because he is true to the law of his own being. There are two hymns which finely phrase this thought. One is A. L. Waring's:

In service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me.
My secret heart is taught the truth
That makes Thy children free,
A life of self-renouncing love
Is one of liberty.

The same thought is expressed in George Matheson's hymn-prayer:

Father Divine, I come to Thee,
I yield a captive to Thy sway,
That Love's gold chain may set me free
For all the burden of the day.

All of this has an application to nations as well as individuals. Nations can only be free as they substitute love for hate. No nation, however populous, however rich, or however heavily armed, can of itself gain assurance of security. Security, like prosperity, is no longer possible for any nation acting alone. The time has arrived when the most heavily armed nation is likely to become the most insecure, for armaments inevitably tend to war, and modern war

brings to ruin every participant, whether victorious or vanquished. The day for regional and group alliances is past. The path to freedom now lies through international understanding, international co-operation, and through international action in fields of trade and finance and in everything that promotes the health and comfort and satisfaction of mankind.

Is liberty to degenerate into mere selfish isolation, as in the days past? Then the danger is that a worse tyranny may come upon us. All history proves that organised tyranny is mightier than unorganised or disorganised liberty. The French Revolution of 1789 proclaimed the sacred watchwords of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." But the excesses of the French Revolution paved the way for Napoleon Bonaparte, and, as has been said, instead of the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," he wrote across the pages of history in letters of blood the words "Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery." And if something like that is not to be the fate of the world again, the nations must cease trying to solve the problems of the future by stubbornly thinking in terms of the past. They must move on to a new unity of love. They must go forward to a new plane with hope, even with confidence, that the mind of mankind is open, that the hearts of men are just, and that true liberty is not only possible but within the reach of all who walk in the path to which experience and wisdom and the Spirit of God so clearly point. And in the new law of mutual service and loyalty to duty freedom will find its only true bulwark. "By love, serve one another."

XIV

VISION

PRAYER

Lord of all power and might we rejoice in Thy works. Thy glory flames from sun and star. Accept such songs as we are able to offer and pity us when we can offer none. Pity the tears and the fears that are due to lack of vision. When we cannot be glad, help us at least to be trustful, and in the patience of faith and hope to possess our souls.

Inspire and guide with Thy Spirit the few who are endowed above the many with high position, with command and influence, with gifts and resources, to the end that they may be ministers to the many. Be with those who write. Keep them pure and teach them counsel. Direct and prosper their consultations who conduct the affairs of the nation, and are occupied with the making and shaping of our laws. When any are weary of trying, and inclined to let circumstances drag them at their pleasure, to yield to self-despondency and self-despair, put Thou new strength into them. Rouse them with a sense of sonship and dignity. Pity, O Lord, the purposeless, the indolent, the self-centred, and those who toil from day to day to satisfy themselves. Be merciful to all in whose homes there is sorrow and woe, to all broken beneath blows of adversity, to all who suffer in secret behind a smiling mask.

"Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name Thou wilt grant their requests; fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of Thy servants as may be most expedient for them, granting us in this world knowledge of Thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore." Amen.

XIV

VISION

THE word used at the head of this chapter has been a long time coming into its own. It is a wonderfully rich and profound word. It was constantly used by ancient prophets and quite as constantly abused and misunderstood by their readers. The qualities which this word connotes are far higher than any mere description of physical clear-sightedness. There is, first of all, the power of forming an ideal, of seeing and describing a thing in the fulfilment of the promise and potency that are in it. "The inlet of the human eye" it has been said, "is one of the smallest of openings. The sun is the largest mass in our system of worlds; yet so good is the adjustment between the two, that through an opening that a pin's head could not enter there comes in upon us almost everything that can be called scientific knowledge." Thus Vision might be called the right adjustment of faculty and opportunity.

But there are also two other inward powers included in the word. To these we give the names *insight* and *intuition*—penetration into the inner essence of things, intuition of things invisible; a keen discrimination in human affairs and an unreasoned conviction of moral truth. Perhaps pene-

trativeness is the best word to describe this power, the ability to see into, to see through, to get down beneath the surface of things and discern their real nature.

God keeps His holy mysteries
Just on the outside of man's dream,
In diapason slow we think,
To hear their pinions rise and sink
While they float pure beneath His eyes
Like swans adown a stream.

Things nameless, which in passing, so
Do touch us with a subtle grace,
We say, who passes? They are dumb,
We cannot see them go or come;
Their touches fall, soft, cold as snow
Upon a blind man's face.

Great things in this life are achieved by those who can see far and deep. The artist owes his distinction not to the fact of his materials, but to the fact that he sees in the human form, or in Nature, or in the world of ideas, what is hidden from the less discerning sight of his fellows. So, also, the art, for example, of Shakespeare or of Scott depends on their power of insight, on their discernment, on the internal play of passions in human society, on their detection of pathos or humour, or whatever else it may be, where to the ordinary observer all would have possessed the monotony of common life. The statesman differs from the mere politician by his power of insight. He sees all the circumstances of the present in their vast complexity. He sees the elements in the existing society and polity, which would, if they were al-

lowed free play, make for the common good. And he bends all energies to bring about the necessary changes. The great leaders in religion are men who are distinguished by their power of insight. They are the men who see most clearly what is right, and they also see that the powers that make for what is right are greater than any that are opposed to them. The prophet is the man who sees, but not, as we often think, the man who sees things in a far future out of relation to his own time. He is the man who sees what actually is in the present in which he lives, while his contemporaries are wholly blind, or see very partially, or see amiss. It is a noble wish that is put into the mouth of Moses: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets"—that is to say, would that all men could see, that, having seen, they could testify what they have seen.

The power of vision will enable each of us to discover the ideal self. On one side we are worse than we think. We are all covered up with plausible excuses. What would be sin in another we understand all about. It is not that at all in us. It has that behind it which explains it. What would be a very poor thing in another we have shaped into some imaginary virtue and we think far more of it than it is worth. But if it be true that we are worse than we know, it is twice true that we are better than we know. There is a hidden self far better than the actual self we have managed to attain to. If we could live upon the platform of the ideal, and lay hold upon the nobler man that we have had aspirations after, we would find ourselves repudiating ourselves as we are. When we are tempted to say, I

am a mere nobody, I count for nothing in this world and never will; when we are tempted to throw up the game and sink back into the fatalism that says, It is my doom, this heritage is not for me, let us remember that failure in the past is no doom for any man. It is only a challenge for us to find the truer self that has not yet been discovered.

The vision of the ideal self means the hallowing of man. It does not mean the fostering of pride but it does mean a deeper reverence for human personality. It is not always easy for a man to be hopeful for himself. It does not help him a great deal if others are hopeful for him, because they do not know him. Standing in the light of the ideal self a man sees himself as he is in the light of God. He feels his superiority to everything else the world may contain. He is above it all. He is more excellent in dignity, more wonderful in complexity, more beautiful in variety. He is a note deeper in the music of existence than all the harmony of the orbs of light. You may have watched through a telescope, climbing up some far off snow peak, a black speck which you knew was a man like yourself and you may have felt—there is a being greater than the earth and all the worlds: Orion and Pleiades might fall upon him and crush him but his immortal spirit would rise victorious and claim its kinship with that Being who made the stars. We seem to ourselves at times like atoms whirled about in some rushing storm or threads carried by swift shuttles through the warp and woof of fate. But if atoms and threads we are atoms that think and hope and remember and do. We are threads that are a part of

the gorgeous tapestry of a mighty and solemn past. We belong to a race that has conquered the earth, annihilated space and time, turned the ocean into the vassal of man, builded cathedrals and wrought all the grandeur of history.

On the intellectual side that vision will enable him to realize that he was created to know and that knowledge is the sceptre of his power, the source of his enjoyment. The desire to learn is deeply rooted within him, and it is against his will or through a deplorable perversion of his nature that he is content with ignorance or error or half-truth. The importance of the vision is accentuated by the examples of arrested development on every side. I am thinking of the men who grew up to a certain point, and then, because of some great success which satisfied them or some failure which warped them, they quietly surrendered the intellectual life and submitted to fossilization. They pass their dead line sometimes at the age of sixty, sometimes at the age of twenty-five.

The man who has not allowed the vision to fade into the light of common day resolves that if he cannot keep up his studies in a literal sense he will at least keep the student attitude through life. He will forever commune with nature in her visible forms. He will live in fellowship with the noblest spirits of the past who have expressed themselves in literature, in art, in science, in religion. He will keep his soul foursquare to all the winds that blow and look for light from every quarter of the sky. He will keep the power to wonder and receive and to greet the unseen with a cheer. All the time he

will be keenly conscious that if the day ever comes when he shall say in science, This is the end of human knowledge; or in public life, Here is the final limit of civic duty; or in religion, Here is a formula beyond which human thought can never go—on that day he will be dead.

We are not what we think we are,
But what we think, we are.

Not merely of the intellect is this true, but of every faculty of our complex personality. Character possesses the capacity for development. Hope is the growing inspection of a widening horizon. It is deeply rooted in the inner consciousness that we are slowly moving towards these high achievements. There is nothing in our hearts so uplifting as a firm faith in our ability to constantly outgrow ourselves. Every step we take in a certain direction increases our inclination for that way. Every effort helps to give the deeper self the mastery. Dr. Kelman tells of an old man who had great responsibilities. He was the calmest, ablest, most judicial, most statesmanlike man Kelman ever knew. They all wondered how he did it and said, "Well, that is the way he is built. He is one of those geniuses that keeps himself in hand and nothing ever gets him out of hand. Would God that we had been made that way!" One day he met a very dear friend of his, an old man then, who told him that when they were boys together at school and college, his had been one of the hottest tempers he had ever known, and by the grace of God the thing had been done. There was

another self waiting behind that old hot, hasty self that came out and developed into the statesman.

The power of vision will enable us to discover the ideal world. Surely this is one of our crying needs today. Marmont said of Napoleon, "There is so much future in his mind." I feel inclined to dispute that saying so far as Napoleon is concerned, except when he was thinking and speaking of Jesus. Napoleon certainly recognised that there was future in the mind of Jesus. We think of his oft-quoted words: "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded great empires. But upon what did the creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone built His empire upon love and to this day millions of men would die for Him." More than sixty years ago Professor Goldwin Smith, in a notable lecture, called on Christian men to realize how the picture which the Gospel records give of the Master's life is free from the limitations which have circumscribed the vision of even the greatest of the world's leaders. He describes the picture as showing "the essence of man's moral nature, clothed with a personality so vivid as to excite through all ages the most intense affection, yet divested of all those peculiar characteristics, the accidents of place and time, by which human personalities are marked."

We would change that watchword so popular a few years ago "Back to Christ" into "Forward to Christ." He is always out ahead. We feel today as never before the magnetic power of His great personality. When we stand in His presence all the finer instincts of our nature are appealed to. He inspires us as fine music thrills and awakens the soul within.

to the purest emotion and aspiration. He lifts us into a clearer atmosphere far above much of the depressing modern atmosphere which like a fog obscures the vision of things beautiful and true. If the present system of affairs seems to us complex and exacting, there is no telling at what a terrific rate we will be living fifty years from now. But we feel confident that central in that expanding civilization will be the figure of the Master as the inspiration to all that is good and the restrainer of the evil eccentricities of men. Jesus is the King of the centuries. Jesus is the Keeper of the historic scrolls. If He is to lead He must set a space between Himself and all that follow, and such leadership we hold He has. Society will be regenerated when its members regulate their relations to one another by His law of love. The world will be transformed when the nations accept His teachings as the law of life.

The shrewdest and clearest thinkers about present-day life and its problems may be quite without the vision which gives a different character to it all. Do you remember Fitzgerald's question as he and Tennyson stood together before a line of marble busts wherein Dante and Goethe had been placed side by side—"What is it which is present in Dante's face and absent from Goethe's?" and Tennyson's curt reply, "The Divine?" Where there is no vision the people perish. The lesson is writ large on the page of human history. Ancient Greece, for all her intellectual brilliance and artistic achievement, fell irrevocably to pieces before the stronger foe, just for want of that vision based on anything that could endure. Ancient Rome, for all her

splendid ideals of order and justice, crumbled into impotence because even her well-worn rules and stately philosophies had no vision to vivify and recreate. Is it not time we turned aside to inquire wherein lies for us the difference between our heritage and theirs? If our end is to be different it will be because of the God-given vision which inspires an unconquerable hope. That vision brought within the reach of men will quietly win its way. Happy the man or nation to whom there comes that "uncovering of the eye" to the vision of His presence; he who shall

Gaze one moment on the Face, whose beauty
Wakes the world's great hymn;
Feel it one unutterable moment
Bent in love o'er Him;
In that look feel heaven, earth, men, and angels
Distant grow and dim;
In that look feel heaven, earth, men, and angels
Nearer grow through Him.

From all this it naturally follows that the people without vision are our greatest national danger. And who are the people without vision? Some of them are those who are lacking in the spirit of magnanimity. At this time trade is bad, unemployment is alarmingly large. It is impossible to be constantly in touch with unemployed men without witnessing the deteriorating effect upon character. They seek for work day in and day out until the time comes when they cease to care. The most serious effect of unemployment is not an economic one. It is in the

scorching of life, the searing of human souls. There is sore need for the restoration of trade. Such restoration is impossible unless a more generous policy replaces that of the recent past. Whatever we may think of the Russian revolution we need not blink the fact that its spirit will spread to Western lands unless capitalism can be brought more than in the past to serve the vital interests of all the people. Moreover, men are talking of the next great war. The talk is the result of the irritation, jealousy and suspicion which are still widespread. Such talk will, in the end, create the evils which it predicts unless we can get a new spirit into international affairs. The Christ-spirit would produce disarmament, and unless we get disarmament we shall inevitably drift into another war.

We have reached a stage when civilisation must become a great world wide unity or perish. It is folly to talk of going back to the era of separate self-sufficing states. Commerce has already knit us all together. And if the various countries thus linked together are in a state of armed jealousy, another war must come. "How oft the sight of means to do ill-deeds make ill-deeds done." I wish we might all feel how vitally necessary for human civilisation at its present stage the *League of Nations* has become. It would not fail to fulfil our hopes if the moral enthusiasm of the people were behind it. Our need is for practical idealists who believe that the divine qualities in men can triumph over animal appetites. To say this much is to expose oneself to the taunt of being a "dreamer of dreams."

Dreamers of dreams, we take the taunt with gladness,
Knowing that God, beyond the years you see,
Hath wrought the things that count with you for madness
Into the substance of the things to be.

Others who lack in vision are those for whom selfishness is the supreme law of existence. Here speaks a great English statesman: "No people can in the future consider itself victorious if it has sought its own security and not at the same time the security of other peoples." Here speaks a distinguished American preacher: "Today the United States is far and away the richest country in the world. But in order to remain a prosperous people we must go on producing; and in order to go on producing we must find markets for what we produce. We must find them not only here in America but across the seas; for we ourselves can no longer consume all that we are producing. And in order to find necessary markets both at home and abroad we must concern ourselves with the prosperity of other peoples. . . . Always and everywhere, in the long run, selfishness is self-defeating. It is self-defeating because it is short-sighted. Any man who goes about asking, 'What is there in it for me?' will presently discover that the answer to that question is, 'Mighty little.'"

The past bears clear witness to this truth. They whose lives have been most freely given for the good of men have linked themselves by their conduct to the nobility of times gone by and go forward into times to come the true kings of humanity. They hold as their heritage the gratitude of the ages and

all hearts are their empire. Whose names, for instance, are repeated from lip to lip and from heart to heart and from continent to continent? Whose deeds quicken the dull pulses of virtue? Men who forgot themselves in thought for others. Men in whose ears the pleas of selfishness were overcome by the cries of their suffering fellows. They rise before us the true heroes of mankind, until passing over the paths strewn with their sacrifice we stand in the presence of One who declared that service to others was the test of real greatness. As it is with individuals so is it with nations.

XV

PATRIOTISM

PRAAYER

Eternal God, from Thee all things come, in Thee all things consist, to Thee all things again return. We adore Thee as the Creator of our bodies and the Father of our spirits. Thou art willing to bestow Thy riches upon us and yet we are spiritually poor. Forgive us and grant unto us the taking hand, the open heart, the unclosed door, the unshuttered window, that Thou in Thy great willingness may be able to bestow upon us infinite riches.

We beseech Thee to give to all who seek Thee the assurance that Thou dost not cast off any who come to Thee in sincerity and truth. We think of the forlorn and the forsaken; of those who have made what looks like a failure of life; of those who have been wronged; those who are misunderstood and misjudged; those who are introspective and despondent. We ask Thee to lift all these on to a higher plane of experience. Give us to know that which we ought to know for the living of our life. Bind us closely to our fellow-men in the fellowship of compassion and brotherly kindness.

Especially do we pray Thee for the spiritual welfare of our Empire. Let the throne be ever established in righteousness and in that service that maketh great. Make Thy churches more fit to bear witness for Thee and to labour for the conversion of men to Thy salvation. Pour out upon all preachers and teachers fresh visions of God, new revelations of the purpose of Jesus. Break up the fountains of sin and lawlessness. Give wisdom to those who have the management of affairs. Keep the nations of the earth at peace. Strengthen the powers that are for good and weaken those that are for evil. Breathe knowledge and strength upon all Thy people. So over all the earth let the knowledge of the Lord flow till it covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

XV

PATRIOTISM

THE sentiment of patriotism is one of the most sacred affections of the human heart. Love to the land of our fathers, the land where we opened our eyes to the light of the world, where we learned our mother-tongue and grew up at home, there are few passions so influential in men's lives. This passion has seemed to some to mark an arrest of development in "the psychical expansion of the individual, a half-way house between mere self-centredness and full human sympathy." It has been condemned as pure egoism. This was the view of Ruskin: "Patriotism is an absurd prejudice founded on an extended selfishness." Mr. Grant Allen calls it "a vulgar vice—the national or collective form of the monopolist instinct." For Mr. Havelock Ellis it is "a virtue—among barbarians." All the world knows that Dr. Johnson defined it as the last refuge of a scoundrel. Evidently there are false forms of patriotism. In its sacred name ignoble men do ignoble things. There is a patriotism that is contemptible. It affects swaggering superiority to all foreigners. The nations have suffered enough from that barbaric arrogance. There is the noisy type of patriotism, given to windy enthusiasms about national

flags. In spite of all its perverted forms there is a patriotic sentiment that all self-respecting citizens should entertain. "Next to the love of parents for their children," wrote Edmund Burke, "the strongest instinct, both natural and moral, that exists in man is the love of his country—an instinct indeed, which extends even to the brute creation. . . . We all know that the natal soil has a sweetness in it beyond the harmony of verse."

It is impossible to turn over the pages of human history without feeling that patriotism has been one of the most sacred motives in human effort, in human suffering and struggle. The sentiment of patriotism has appealed not to the meanest and narrowest, but to the loftiest and the largest souls. Take the poets, for example. Have they not sung of patriotism? We cannot forget Shakespeare's noble address to

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this sea of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
Dear for her reputation thro' the world.

Some of us cannot but be thrilled when we read Scott's words about

Caledonia, stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child.

We cannot but feel a pathetic interest in Moore's ode to Ireland. Whenever we read any poetry that is inspired by the sentiment of patriotism our blood seems to flow more quickly. Is this an angry and savage sentiment that we must suppress in ourselves?

Or let us turn for a moment to the Scriptures. The Hebrews of the Old Testament were intensely patriotic. We think of the noble wail of the captives at the rivers of Babylon: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." We admire the indomitable faith and hope of the Jews, while we shudder at their ferocity towards their enemies—a ferocity which wanted to dash their children against the stones, or to send them to beg their bread in desolate places. The prophets were patriots. They denounced the sins of their people, but they had no joy in their ministry of judgment. Think of Jeremiah for instance, and read the struggles of the man against the divine burden that was laid upon him. He spoke with trembling lips because with a broken heart. To him it was no pleasure to see that his nation was ripe for judgment, and that it was his task to tell the people that submission to foreign oppression was the only way to the accomplishment of the divine purpose. In Judaism we see nationalism at its best and worst.

Jesus was a patriot. While belonging to all mankind and transcending all racial limitations He loved his native land as a sincere and noble-minded man could not fail to do. It is impossible to read the Gospels without perceiving how precious to Him were its mountains and lakes, its cities and countrysides. He stood in the succession of the prophets who were the exponents of Jewish patriotism at its highest level. All the ardent hopes which fired the thought of Isaiah, all the melting tenderness of the Psalmists, all the heroic sacrifice of the Maccabees, all the sublime aspirations shadowed by visions of judgment which glow in the pages of the Apocalyptists, are gathered up in that cry of regret and bereavement which broke from the Master's lips when "He saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." Within this "least of all lands" He clave unto the people to whom God had sent Him. This restriction grew out of no indifference to the world's needs. Concentration does not mean exclusion. It may afford a centre for expansion. The man need not love humanity less who loves his own country fervently, and who sets the good, the divinely appointed good of that country before him as an end to be steadfastly followed.

Paul was a patriot. He was a native of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city. He had a healthy pride in the city of his birth and residence. In his *Cities of St. Paul*, Ramsay gives reasons that justify Paul's praise of Tarsus: "It was one of the great cities of the Roman world, a Greek city where the Orient

met the West, the seat of a great university, the home of philosophy, the meeting place of many cults, a town where Jews had a strong foothold. He was glad to be known as Saul of Tarsus, a Jewish citizen of this great city. Paul never forgot he was a Jew, though always the educated Jew." Was it not Paul who was willing to be anathema from Christ, that is, cursed from the presence of Christ for the sake of his own countrymen? Read the indictment he brings against his own people in the Epistle to the Romans. Still through the cloud there breaks the sunshine, and he cherishes the confident hope that his people will at last be brought into the Kingdom of God. This great prophet of Christian universalism was an ardent patriot.

Our contention is simply this—there is such a thing as Christian patriotism and there are many kinds that are not Christian. That patriotism is not Christian that seeks to blind reason and silence conscience. We need to be on our guard against the plea that is sometimes made, "My country, right or wrong, my country"—that once a nation has entered upon a policy, then it is unpatriotic to express any doubts about the righteousness of that policy. We must be silent even although the frenzy of blood-guiltiness may possess the nation. Was Karl Liebknecht disloyal to his country when in August of 1914 he publicly denounced German militarism and declared that the invasion of Belgium was an international crime? Was Lloyd George disloyal to his country when in 1899 he condemned her in her war with South Africa? Was John Morley disloyal when he did the same? Was Abraham Lincoln disloyal

to his country when in the year 1848 he lifted his voice in the House of Representatives against the Mexican war? Were those ten thousand Chinese Christians unpatriotic when they laid down their lives at the feet of Christ rather than renounce Him at the demand of the Boxer leaders and the Empress Dowager?

And now but yesterday the Supreme Court of the United States has declared that my friend and former teacher, Douglas Clyde Macintosh, a professor in the Yale divinity school, is ineligible for citizenship in that country, solely because he would not promise in advance to bear arms in any war in which that nation may become engaged "unless he believed the war to be morally justified." No wonder *The Christian Century* declares that the decision "outrages the nation's conscience." Shades of the Biblical prophets! Did they yield whenever a popular movement was opposed to the voice of God that spake to them? No, they were prophets of God because they guided and guarded their patriotism by reason and conscience. And we are sacrificing to an idol of patriotism what is our most precious possession, our reason and our conscience, if we yield to the plea that we must support our country no matter what policy it may adopt, no matter what unrighteousness or injustice it may perpetrate upon earth.

Dean Inge has recently declared that the idea that the state is above all law, that it is indeed a law unto itself, "would not have been tolerated by those Middle Ages which many persons today feel dis-

posed to despise." We recall the noble lines of William Watson:

The ever lustrous name of patriot
To no man he denied, because he saw
Where in his country's wholeness lay the flaw,
Where on her whiteness the unseemly blot.
England! Thy loyal sons condemn thee.

Be this the measure of our loyalty—
To feel thee noble, and weep thy lapse the more.
This truth by thy true servants is confess'd:
Thy sons, who love thee most, do most deplore.
Know thou thy faithful! Best they honour thee
Who only honour in thee what is best.

That patriotism is not Christian which manifests itself as exclusive nationalism. That is the type of patriotism which Paul so severely rebukes. The arrogance which claims special privilege from God has its counterpart in the ambition that would exalt one nation over all others. There is such a thing as Christian nationalism. We would be suspicious of the man who would proclaim that he loves all families in exactly the same way in which he loves his own. Because he loves his own supremely he should understand better the meaning of family love for all others. Likewise is it with the love of country. "He who loves not his home and country which he has seen, how shall he love humanity in general which he has not seen?" How different is Christian nationalism from that vain conceit and pride which leads men to regard their nation as supreme. Here it is from the pen of a distinguished Britisher: "The British are the greatest people the

world has ever seen." Here it is on the lips of a great Frenchman: "Some day, to be approved by others, it will suffice for one to say: This was the taste of the French; it is thus that this illustrious nation thought." Here it is from a well-known German: "We are morally and intellectually superior to all, without peers. It is the same with our organizations and with our institutions." Here it is as expressed by an American diplomat: "God has yet made nothing or nobody equal to the American people; and I don't think He ever will or can."

All the nations of the earth are destined for a place in the kingdom of God, and any such pride should be emphatically pronounced unchristian no matter what policies may be condemned thereby. A Christian nationalism has nothing in common with that vulgar, vainglorious, aggressive spirit which too often passes for patriotism. It shrinks from trampling on the rights of weaker nationalities. It refuses to allow the false imperialism which thinks and speaks of the world as if it were ordained to be nothing more than the pedestal of British power and which sings with jingoistic passion:

We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,
We've got the men, we've got the ships, and we've got the
money too.

This sham nationalism, as irrational as it is offensive, is not to be reconciled with the just and pacific spirit of Christianity. The Christian nationalist finds in his own love of country the key to the kindred sentiment in a foreigner's mind.

Still more serious is the effect of such unchristian nationalism upon our belief in the one true God. We believe with Dr. Fosdick that "the doctrine of monotheism developed not so much in spite of an opposing theology as of an opposing nationalism. Those primitive peoples believed in tribal gods because they wanted to, because they hated their enemies and did not wish them to have the same god, because they craved freedom to slaughter their foes untroubled by any haunting and to them blasphemous idea that their god cared for their enemies." Centuries before Christ there arose a man who lived centuries in advance of his time. Israel was situated between the great world rivals, Egypt and Assyria. A clash between these powers seemed imminent, and in all probability the battle would be on the soil of Israel. This little country was torn between conflicting political parties, one wishing to ally with Assyria, and the other wishing to join the might of the chariots of Egypt. Amid these conflicting hatreds that exalted many gods, Isaiah declared that God was saying to him, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." This great internationalist realized amid the turmoil of the clash of arms that each country needed the other in order that its own destiny might be fulfilled. "Then shall there be a highroad between Egypt and Assyria, Assyrians passing to Egypt and Egyptians to Assyria; Egyptians and Assyrians alike shall worship the Eternal. Then shall Israel form a triple alliance with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing to the world around."

We of this generation need not be told what the

passions let loose in a time of war do to the worship of the Eternal. The frenzy of hate toward another people with whom we may be engaged in war silences conscience, destroys reason, and reduces our God to a tribal god. Mark Twain may have been the prince of humourists but it is impossible to read the prayer he wrote for war time without realizing this truth with a terrible solemnity:

“O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriotic dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended through wastes of their desolated land. . . . For our sakes, who adore Thee, Lord, blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of their wounded feet! We ask of one who is the Spirit of love and who is the ever faithful refuge and friend of all that are sore beset, and seek his aid with humble and contrite hearts. Grant our prayer, O Lord, and Thine shall be the praise and honour and glory now and ever, Amen.”

Christian patriotism means the cultivation of Peace. By this I mean not only the repudiation of war. One of our dangers is in thinking of Peace as the mere absence of war. But in our complex world Peace requires the machinery for expressing our de-

sire. Such machinery exists in the League of Nations, in a variety of treaties, in the Kellogg Pact, in such conferences on Disarmament as is to be held at Geneva in a few months' time. Let us hope and pray that the demand for disarmament will become so insistent that the statesmen of the world will have less difficulty than they have at present in undertaking this task.

Is any price too great to be paid for world-peace as a perpetual possession? We are in the position of being able to judge war by its aftermath. The vision of 10,000,000 dead men haunts us. They were so young to die. They were the flower of the race. We are not going to forget their dutifulness, their courage, their sacrifice. At the same time we are going to assert that they never ought to have had to die. We have learned the utter futility of war. In a great war, like a great strike, all parties lose. We know what war does to bring about the exhaustion of morals, the eclipse of faith, the rebirth of cynicism. We have learned through bitter experience how wide is the gulf that lies between its promises and its accomplishments. At the beginning of the war, Professor Gilbert Murray said that its effect would be to inflict a serious injury on the higher forms of religion, and to give a great stimulus to the lower superstitious forms. This has turned out to be absolutely true. We are all convinced of the truth of Wellington's saying that next to losing a war there is nothing more disastrous than winning one.

Christianity ennobles patriotism by exalting service as the very principle of genuine greatness.

This is the Master's standard for the nation as well as for the individual. It is a significant fact that when the people of France were asked a few years ago to express their judgment in a great popular vote as to who was the greatest Frenchman in history, the largest number of votes were not given to Napoleon who waded through streams of human blood to empire, but to Pasteur, the saviour of human lives. Patriotic types have been too few in the past. The warrior has drawn to himself too large a measure of patriotic homage. The greatness of men should be measured by their serviceableness not by their far-resounding exploits. The Christian ideal sets the cross of sacrifice on crowns. Modern biology confirms this by teaching that love and self-sacrifice are more fundamental to nature than hatred and self-preservation.

The longer I live and the more I see
Of the struggle of souls towards the heights above,
The stronger this truth comes home to me:
That the universe rests on the shoulders of love,
A love so limitless, deep, and broad,
That men have renamed it,
And called it—God.

I conclude this essay by quoting the language with which a well-known Japanese journal addressed the people of England:

Thy greatness, O England, is not thy own making. Thou hast not stored for thyself coals in Lancashire and iron in Yorkshire. Thy commodious harbours of Liverpool, Bristol, Southampton, etc., were not digged by thee. The warm wind that comes

from the west, and the fruitful rains which it brings, are brought to thy shores by a power that is not thy own. Thou wast placed in the centre of the land hemisphere, and the whole world turns towards thee. Thou art the world's mart, and thy wealth is the world's. Then thy laws, literature, and religion—they, too, are not all thy thinking. What were thy Hobbs, Austin, and Blackstone, had there not been Caesar and Justinian for thee? What were thy Milton and Shakespeare, had there not been Æschylus, Horace, and Virgil, who unwittingly wrought for thee? What were thy Wyckliff, Knox, and Wesley, had there not been Isaiah, Daniel, and Paul, who preached for thee? Rome, Greece, Judea, Phoenicia, all contributed their parts to make thee great. Thou art the product of ages of human labour, from Abraham and Homer downwards. The world demands from thee a service which is thy due. Thy pluck and skill ought to be freely given to help the helpless, to rescue the perishing. Be thou kingly—gracious, meek, and true. Attest thy greatness by larger service to man.

XVI

ESCAPING THE PAST

PRAYER

We depend upon Thee, O Giver of all good gifts, even for the power to approach Thee, and for the very spirit of prayer itself. Thou dwellest not in temples made with hands, but hast chosen the receptive heart wherein to rest. May we prepare Thy dwelling-place, Thy sanctuary in our souls. We thank Thee, O God, for all the greatness of life as it has been revealed to us. Despite the sadness and the darkness some vision of life's deeper meaning, its solemn reality, its spiritual purpose, has been given to us all. We thank Thee for every revelation of Thyself that has come to the world, and above all for the revelation of Thy mind and heart, and of our own possibilities which has been vouchsafed to us in Christ our Lord. We thank Thee for all the experiences of life that have helped to lift us a little nearer to our eternal home, helped to deepen our nature, helped to enable us to understand a little better the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

Look, we beseech Thee, mercifully upon those who have lost their self-respect, who are despising themselves for the things they have done which they know to be evil and which they can never undo, who cannot forgive themselves and cannot realize there is forgiveness with Thee. We pray that Thou wilt penetrate beneath these delusions and get at the heart of those in distress of mind because of their records, and give them to know Thy pardon and Thy peace. We think, too, of busy men, finding themselves becoming increasingly insensible to higher things, the things of the spirit that once had power to move them. We pray that Thou wilt set them free. May Thy spirit of comfort, which means Thy spirit of strengthening, as well as of sympathy, take hold of every heart. And may we all bow ourselves to the service of the great ideal revealed in Jesus Christ. Amen.

XVI

ESCAPING THE PAST

IF there is one faculty of our nature which we think of as vagrant, over which we despair of ever gaining full control, it is the faculty of memory. What we shall do, even what we shall think or feel, that we can in a measure prescribe and choose. But over memory our power is limited indeed. Whether we shall keep a thing in memory or banish it from memory, whether we shall remember or forget, that does not lie within our say. We often forget what we wish to remember, and we often remember what we would fain forget. And of the two things our wills are most powerless in the matter of forgetting. We can do something in making ourselves remember. In one way and another that capacity can be trained and enlarged. But to forget—that is another question. And so that strange quality of our nature which we call *remorse* rises in power within us. It is the feeling engendered by the changelessness of an ill-spent past, in whole or in part.

The greatest poets have not forgotten this. It is the central motive of many a Greek tragedy. It is the undertone that runs beneath the music of the psalms. It inspired Shakespeare to write *Macbeth*, and many scenes in other plays that cannot be for-

gotten because they are so profoundly true to life. Even if we have not sinned openly and shamefully against the laws of convention or decency, there is no soul that can read these dramas and soliloquies without an echo, clear or faint, rising out of the depth of his own spiritual consciousness. Memory sleeps but it never dies. Men are always liable to sudden awakenings, during which the past opens its graves and the sea of forgetfulness gives up its dead. It is the fear that even death may have no power to kill memory and drown remorse that keeps many a man from suicide who otherwise might rush headlong into that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns. We remember Hamlet's soliloquy:

To be, or not to be; that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against the sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep:
No more: and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
Perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause!

While all this is true there is a sense in which we can master ourselves to forget. Not in the sense of erasing things from out the book of memory. That is beyond the possible. But in the sense of decisively

putting things behind us, definitely refusing to let our thoughts linger on them or our memory cherish them or our life be ruled by them. In that sense we have the power to forget. To such an effort of forgetfulness life constantly calls us. I would have these words reach those who never seem to be able to get over some past wrong they have suffered. They will expatiate on that theme as long as your patience lasts and longer. They morbidly destroy their capacity for happiness through not allowing the old wound to heal. In their presence one could almost believe that the "one unpardonable sin is the sin of not pardoning." The Master can forgive anything but an unforgiving spirit.

If ever sin went paired with folly it is here. The past injury, the past feud, the old grudge—they are dead really. It is only human foolishness that keeps them in a ghostly semblance of life. But it is a foolishness that works havoc to the inner life. Here is the word of one who has the right to speak—a distinguished member of the staff of the Harvard Medical School: "It is surprising to see how many people will keep a careful watch on their weight, their blood-pressure and their digestive apparatus, but all the time pay no attention to those conflicts within the mind which eventually betray themselves in a dozen ways. The father of a family will consult his physician about a high blood-pressure, but say nothing about the fact that he is no longer on speaking terms with his own son. Innumerable people will go to doctors to complain of headaches and weakness, or will tell their friends they are suffering

from fainting attacks, while all the time they conceal the emotional disturbances within the self which are largely responsible for their troubles."

When Peter asked Jesus "If my brother sin against me, how often shall I forgive him? Until seven times?" and received the answer, "I say not unto you, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven," Peter was being taught good psychology as well as good religion. "No man," says Emerson, "ever had a point of pride that was not injurious to him." And in speaking of Lincoln he said, "His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong." Controlling our recollections is almost as important as controlling our temper. We are apt to forget completely a hundred little kindnesses and courtesies which one has shown us, and to remember a single careless slight or thoughtless word. No man can bottle up the resentment of old grudges and not injure his soul. Nor will it do to say that we are willing to forgive people when they repent. Jesus' way was to forgive people in order that they might repent. It was that attitude of His on the cross expressed in the amazing words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," that led to the conversion of the Japanese criminal, Tokichi Ishii. His autobiography, written in prison, has been given to the world by Caroline Macdonald who visited him in prison and left him the Gospel which produced the result. This man had spent his whole life in crime, and yet he had the chivalry to give himself up to justice when another man was being sentenced for the murder which he had committed.

He lay in the prison at Tokio condemned. His first and only contact with Christianity was the visit of the two ladies who left that little Gospel behind them. In sheer ennui he read it. Coming to the account of the crucifixion, he was arrested. But those words of Jesus "Father forgive them" stirred him to the depth of his soul. He seemed to recognise at once who it was who said this. He wrote a very wonderful narrative of what Christ meant to him before he died. As it was the amazing characteristic of Christ to forgive those who injured Him, so it is the way He commends to all who would share His tranquil life.

There are others who go about permanently discouraged through indulging in vain regrets. Whatever line of life they have chosen for themselves, or had allotted to them by circumstances, they fret themselves because they might have been or done something else which they think would have suited them better. If they are in business they think how much more elevating it would be to belong to one of the learned professions. If they are among the learned professions they lament that their labours are unluccrative, and keep them out of the main current of human interest. If they are married they regret that they have so many mouths to feed; if single that they have to live alone. They cannot content themselves with the opportunities of usefulness and happiness which they have without brooding over opportunities which they have renounced or lost. Robert Frost expresses this mood of vain regret in his poem *The Road Not Taken*:

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth,

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by
And that has made all the difference!

All who are held in the grip of that mood would do well to remember how little they know about the untravelled road, that we cannot choose to be anything without at the same time refusing to be several other things which we might have been. We must learn to accept this law of life, and to look without regret on the possibilities of that which we have chosen not to avail ourselves.

The question is more difficult when we come to our actual past life, to the sins which often haunt the memory with their evil and their shame. Some of our teachers say that we should have these things continually before us, to warn and humble us. Thus Dean Inge: "If whole tracks of our past lives are disfigured by manifest habitual faults, I do not hesitate to say that even if we think that we have outgrown them we ought to think about them fre-

quently, and ask forgiveness for them." On the other hand no modern writer took a more serious view of sin than Robert Louis Stevenson. That gives all the more significance to his point of view: "Never allow your mind to dwell on your own misconduct; that is ruin. The conscience has morbid sensibilities; it must be employed but not indulged. One of the leading virtues is to let oneself alone." And again he prays: "Help us with the grace of courage, that we be none of us cast down when we sit lamenting amid the ruins of our happiness or our integrity; touch us with the fire from the altar, that we may be up and doing to rebuild our city."

The higher man of today, said Sir Oliver Lodge in an unforgettable sentence some years ago, is not worrying about his sins at all. If I remember correctly Sir Oliver did not altogether endorse the attitude, but there is no doubt that his generalization was right, though it might have been analysed more carefully. The higher man of today does not worry about his sins, not because he believes that there are none to worry about, but because he believes that they are not got rid of by worrying about them. There he is right, if he means merely worry. But this attitude may mean that he believes sins are best overcome by not thinking about them. An astute American psychologist has declared that the effect of a congregation saying the General Confession is simply to lower the general sense of well-being; and, therefore, that it ought not to be recited. This means that though there is such a thing as sin, and though it may be serious, the best thing to do is not to think about it.

Is it not time that we looked at the Christian attitude again? This is well represented by St. Paul. He did not brood over his past sins such as his persecution of the Christians. He admitted frankly that it was a blot on his career, that he was unworthy to be called an apostle. But he knew that he was forgiven, and the memory of his grievous blunder only stirred him to labour more abundantly than the other apostles. Paul has distinguished so clearly between the right and wrong kind of sorrow for sin that there is no excuse for confounding them: "I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." There you have godly sorrow looking mainly forward, and the sorrow of the world—the morbid sorrow producing weariness—looking backward. The right sorrow stimulates, the wrong sorrow paralyses. The one turns honest shame into grim resolve, the other turns self-contempt into morose despondency. "A fault really overcome and repented of may be a jewel in a good man's crown. A fault merely left behind and forgotten can certainly not be that, and may be like a dangerous

crack in a house wall dishonestly covered by white-wash."

It is customary to believe that the past is by its very nature, unalterable. What is done, we say, cannot be undone. There it is so fixed that not even God can alter it. It may be regretted, deplored, repented of, but it cannot be changed. It is over and done with; it is irrevocable, bury it then and let it be. This is the advice of Goethe:

Would'st fashion for thyself a seemly life?
Then fret not over what is past and gone,
But, whatsoe'er thou may'st have lost behind.
Live now as if thy life were just begun.
Be sure that thou no fellow mortal hate,
And all the rest leave to a Higher Power.

I take the Christian view to be quite other than this. The past is really never done with; but it can be undone. And that not only in regard to sin, but with all sides of life. A man can stand up to his past and refund it into a higher currency. That process can go on as long as the man does. There are resources in man and in God that are greater than we know. "God cannot undo the past" is an awful saying, which has perhaps spread the darkness of despair over more lives than any other human conception.

All recent work on the subject makes it clear that a considerable part of every man lies buried beneath the surface of his conscious life. It is suppressed but it is part of the man none the less. Who would have thought that Zacchaeus concealed a hidden streak of magnanimity? Who would have suspected Scrooge of extravagant generosity? These men showed what

was in them during their mortal life. But many go to the grave like Ibsen's Agnes in *Brand* with their "heart's rich treasure all undrawn." What right have we to say that the final thing about any man is the part we have so far seen? Is it not better at least to keep an open mind? The apostle speaks about the glory that shall be revealed in us. I suspect those words have a far wider and deeper application than we have ever given them.

Vast as are the resources in man, how utterly beyond human estimate are the resources in God. "It is simply not true," says D. S. Cairns, "to speak of the irreparable past, and not well to dwell upon it. Go deeper and take God into account. It is part of His omnipotence that He can retrieve it. The story is not finished yet. Those who believe in God believe in a retrieving future." The Master never dwells on sin except in connection with repentance and forgiveness. But what do we mean when we say our sins are forgiven? Forgiveness tends to be restricted in our minds to the poverty-stricken significance of "letting-off," "permitting to go scot-free," "releasing from consequences." But who wants to stand before God in this formal and external relation? Forgiveness is not passing over our faults, nor pretending that we are something that we are not. Look at the word forgiveness; it will tell itself what it means. Separate the first part of the word like this: FOR-giveness, and then take it away altogether and you have giveness. That means God's habit of always giving Himself to those who need Him. What does that little word *for* mean then? It simply means giving very much. When we know we need God,

He forgives; that is He gives Himself to us still more. To all of us He has *givenness*; to those of us who know how much we need Him He has *forgiveness*.

From the divine side forgiveness never means the overlooking of sin but the overcoming of it. Men have always been tempted to think lightly of their wrong deeds and their wrong selves, of imagining that all that is necessary is to ask forgiveness and have God sponge the slate clean without any particular care or cost. Forgiveness is no such shallow business as that. If we have ever really forgiven one who has wronged us we know better than that. We cannot forgive our fellow-man by saying lightly, "Don't mention it." That would never make things right. It is a most costly thing to forgive sin—the most costly thing in the world. That is why men have instinctively associated forgiveness with the Cross. We may not know all that the Cross means, but it surely means that forgiveness is not easy or cheap, and yet God will carry it through. It surely means that when we know we need God's forgiveness, He will not overlook the wrong that we do and are, but will set His love at work to overcome the evil. From this it follows that no sin has ever been properly dealt with until it has been forgiven. When it is forgiven it is transformed.

This is our answer to all who ask, Can the past not be undone? The fact of the matter is, it is being undone every day. To undo the past means to give it a new setting, to submit it to a new valuation. There is no better illustration that comes to mind at the moment than the old story of George Eliot's hand-

kerchief. You know the incident—how someone carelessly dropped a blot of ink on one corner of a fine handkerchief and apparently completely spoiled it. But George Eliot began to embroider around the blot till she had incorporated the blot into her design. It was no longer a defect; it took its place in a scheme of beauty. It contributed its part to that greater whole. Is not something like this going on within us when we commit our past to God? We need not conclude that when God helps a man to remake his life he is compelled to carry the flaws forward. God need not be tied down to His material. None of us can tell what God will make of a man when He gets a chance to work upon his life. Our wretched blunders will not remain as scars and flaws in God's temple. If God is ever a Creator He is always creative. There are resources in Him of which we know nothing. Let us take courage. Let us sing with a new meaning:

Finish, then, Thy new creation:
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in Thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

XVII

FACING THE FUTURE

PRAAYER

God, our Father, Thou hast blessed us with the unspeakable blessing of being, and given us our place for a while upon the earth, with the wonder of the starry heavens above us, and the voice of the moral law in our hearts. We believe that a beautiful purpose of Thine with regard to us is in progress and is slowly, yet surely, fulfilling itself. We believe that in the ultimate accomplishment of this purpose, we shall be more than comforted for all the years during which we have seen evil. For all the good things of life that we know to be good we praise Thee, and we ask Thee for grace to praise Thee too for all the good things of life that we have not yet realized to be good. We praise Thee for the revelation of the life divine in Christ our Master. We do not know what the world would have been if He had never come to us, but we thank Thee for our experience of the good He has brought. We beseech Thee that Thou wilt help us to know more and yet more of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Make us worthier to receive them, and take away from our hearts all that hinders the coming of Thy Spirit within us revealing the truth as it is in Him.

O God, we ask Thee that Thou wilt listen to our expression of repentance in that our record is not better than it is. Forgive all our superficiality, our running after the things of the flesh, our forgetfulness of the higher revelations, our disloyalty to the best we have seen. Forgive the selfishness of our joys as well as the selfishness of our sorrows. Lead us in the way that Thou choosest, and give us grace in that way. Help us to rise into higher service, and enter into nobler regions of thought and feeling and achievement. Amen.

XVII

FACING THE FUTURE

PHILLIPS BROOKS used to say that the real test of any life is its expectancy. In the golden days of youth we are all expectant. We are convinced that an earthly paradise is within our reach, and that there is an El Dorado just beyond the silver seas, and that in the golden light of the West are the islands of the blessed. We are led forward by these dreams, these exultant hopes of youth, to our best. We are convinced that there is work to be done, an achievement possible for us, a name to be made, a life to be rounded, a service for the world which may possibly be remembered. Youth is the time of vision. The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts, says Longfellow. In the freshness of youth the eye of the spirit sweeps wide horizons. Youth is the time of energy and strength. Youth is the time of freedom. Henry Drummond used to say that a man does not often change the shape of his collar after he is forty. Youth is the time of adventure. Stevenson has said: "There are not many Dr. Johnsons to set forth upon his first romantic voyage at the age of sixty-four. If we wish to scale a mountain, or visit a thief's kitchen in the East End, to go down in a diving dress or up in a balloon, we must be about it while

we are still young. It will not do to delay until we are dogged with prudence."

Thus it is that youth is the time of achievement. Someone has said that God has written the natural dignity of the young man's life in the eternal statute book of the ages. At the age of 15 Victor Hugo presented a poem to the Academy. At 16 Leigh Hunt was an accomplished writer of verses. At 17 Michael Angelo had room in the famous palaces of art for his pictures and Mozart had entranced the courts of Germany. At 18 Charles Spurgeon was famous as a preacher. At 19 George Stephenson was carrying in his brain an improved steam engine. Bryant had written *Thanatopsis*. At 20 Robert Hall had an enthusiastic audience. At 21 Beethoven had added a great name to music; Wilberforce, Pitt and Gladstone were in Parliament. At 22 Savonarola was robed with a splendid name and Lowell published his first volume. At 23 Rubens was a distinguished artist, Wordsworth had published his *Descriptive Sketches*, Browning had written *Paracelsus*. At 24 John Milton did much of his imperishable work, Ruskin wrote his five volumes of *Modern Painters*. At 25 Luther had attained fame as a reformer, Newton made some of his great discoveries, *Æschylus* was the greatest tragic poet of Greece, Coleridge had written *The Ancient Mariner*, Huss had become a flaming herald for truth. At 26 Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist*, Roger Williams had aroused all the intolerance of New England, Turner was a member of the Royal Academy. At 27 Toplady wrote his *Rock of Ages* and Calvin his immortal *Institutes*. At 28 Wordsworth was joint author with Coleridge, Bacon

was counsel extraordinary for the Queen. At 29 Cromwell had begun his work. At 30 Jefferson was chosen to draft the Declaration of Independence and Reynolds was the greatest portrait painter in England. Bright beams the hope of youth and youth may always be trusted to face the future with optimism.

When manhood comes stealing on with slippered feet life becomes soberer hued. We learn to draw in some of our great expectations. We know that much which we expected to do will never be done, that what we hoped to achieve will not here be achieved. Men of experience and observation are agreed that middle age is the time of greatest peril. Middle age is challenged to face the facts of life. At that time, if not before, the average man is aware that he carries within him a heart, a pair of lungs, some fine fibrous things called nerves, and other items of internal machinery which refuse the work he demanded of them some twenty years before. Then he challenged them; now they challenge him. In vigorous youth he had energy and to spare. Today he must conserve his resources.

The first twenty years of a man's life are the longest he ever knows. They are the years when he has no past. His eyes can only tend towards the future where "distance lends enchantment to the view, and clothes the mountains with its azure hue," and the beyond seems so remote. At middle age those azure-tinted mountains are but dull, drab mounds of common clay. He is disillusioned. Middle age is the age that most clearly understands the comparative values of its physical and mental

equipment. With youth the physical looms large. At thirty a man may have passed the peak of his physical glory. He certainly does not rise much after that. At 45 his "physical barometer does not indicate the altitude of twenty years before." It is now his intellectual equipment comes most fitting to his aid if he will enjoy the cream of life's best. But the worth and power of that equipment depend on the use he made of it in the years behind his back.

Middle age is the age when the reminiscent mood takes hold. It is the age when stocktakings of his life become more frequent and exacting, when he can best appraise the gains and losses of his life. If he wrestles in his youth with the One Great Fact, the Fact will not desert him in his age. He will have faced the Great Reality. Of course if slowing down means standing still, then we have stagnation. The stagnant one is as good as dead, and merely waits his turn for the disposing of his remains. Or if middle age has meant the wearing off of the bloom of life, till laughter itself has a bitter ring and purity and honour have perished, then you have a spectacle of unutterable sadness. How common it is to find a young fellow whom you can remember as a boy, bright and good and strong, who becomes so decrepit and broken that he is practically unrecognisable by the middle of his life. Think of Coleridge, that brilliant mind, with his large discourse, his philosophic power; think of that man who was the prodigy of his age. Think of that man a broken and battered archangel, as they used to say, writing two of the saddest lines in modern literature:

Work without hope draws water in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

I would have middle age face the future by guarding well the hope that springs eternal in the human breast, lest it be turned into the pessimism of darkness and despair. I would have it recognise that the natural decay of passion is not to be confused with the acquiring of positive good. I would warn it against the peril of the closed mind. The past persists in projecting its influence into the future. It holds memories that we look back upon and refuse to part with. It gathers experience that will add to our present usefulness. But no one can live in the past and be really alive. The subtle cords that it winds around us have to be snapped continually. We cannot live in the atmosphere and ideas of yesterday. The greatest joy of middle age is to live by fulfilling its ever-new purpose and marching in harmony with its demands. It was for this that the prophet looked for continual renewal: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Such renewal we all need if our joy in life is to be unfailing.

I would have middle age cherish its belief in the progress of mankind. As Benjamin Kidd taught us to think, it is the tug of the future that is ever dragging the world. There is some curious instinct within the world that it is not meant to stagnate or go back, but that it has a goal. That conviction comes pulsing up in the hearts of men, beats in the music of the poets, soars in the thoughts of the dreamer or the philosopher and is justified by the

stern voice of science. The world is dragging on to a better order, to a purer and sweeter human life, to nobler laws and tenderer mercy. Far on in the future a day will dawn which will make the progress of the present seem but as the twilight of a forgotten past. It is by that hope that middle age is led on, that it strives for better things, and does not despair after manifold discouraging failures. In this connection I think of Whittier's poem, *My Soul and I*. Here is a man who is conversing with himself amidst the uncertainties of the unknown future. He asks:

Where art thou going, soul of mine?
Canst see the end?
And whither this troubled life of thine
Evermore doth tend?

And here is the answer:

Whither I go I cannot tell;
A cloud hangs black,
High as heaven and deep as hell,
Across my track.

And I hear around me sighs of pain,
And the cry of fear,
And a sound like the slow, sad dropping of rain,
Each drop a tear.

And the cloud is dark, and day by day
I am moving thither;
I must pass beneath it on my way,
God pity me, whither!

Then he answers his soul with an optimism that is born of faith:

Folly and fear are sisters twain,
One closing her eyes,
The other peopling the dark inane
With spectral lies.

Know well, my soul, God's hand controls
What e'er thou fearest.
Round him in calmest music rolls
What e'er thou hearest.

What to thee is shadow to Him is day,
And the end He knoweth,
And not on a blind or aimless way
The spirit goeth.

Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness
His own thy will,
And with strength from Him shall thine utter weakness
Life's task fulfil.

And that cloud itself, which now before thee
Looms dark in view,
Shall with gleams of light from the inner glory
Be stricken through.

Whether young or in middle life we must all face the necessity of growing old. There has always been a discussion whether man's happier fate is to die in the fulness of his powers or at the close of their long decline. When the ancients declared that whom the gods love die young, they expressed one view. Robert Browning expressed the opposite when he wrote:

Grow old along with me
The best is yet to be.

The question can never be settled by referring to particular instances. We can all think of men in history who would have been famous had they died at fifty but lived long enough to make themselves infamous. It might be one thing to grow old with Browning and another thing to grow old with Swift. In any case we all aim to live as long as we can. We have known veritable saints who have given up this present world with extreme reluctance. Old age can be tragical. That tragedy consists in this: that losing our physical strength and alertness we discover that we have no spiritual resources to fall back upon, no memory of a well spent life. Those who expect to find happiness in personal comfort and financial security are doomed to disappointment. To come upon old age no kinder, no wiser than we were in middle life, to have sacrificed the things that endure for the things that perish, to end life in a mean, pitiful emptiness, there is the supreme disaster. The time will come when our only resources will be spiritual and intellectual. How rich shall we be then? A modern journalist calls attention to the fact that the most likeable people are not the people who possess a lot of things, but the people who like a lot of things, the people who have a sunny gift of appreciation. Old age need not be tiresome and stale if we have a vital contact with life, if we keep the invigorating enthusiasm and penetrating curiosity of the student, if in solitude and prayer we drop our selfishness and pretence and gain power to live the disciplined and dedicated life.

I am not going to be so foolish as to assert that it is easy to grow old. In his *Intimate Journal* Amiel

says: "To know how to grow old is the master work of wisdom and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living." We appreciate the words of A. C. Benson in one of his essays: "It is not a pleasant moment when a man first recognises that he is out of place on the football field, that he cannot stoop with his old agility to pick up a skimming stroke at coverpoint, that dancing is rather too heating to be decorous, that he cannot walk all day without undue somnolence after dinner, or rush off after a heavy meal without indigestion. And a man, who, out of sheer inability to part from youth, clings desperately and with apoplectic puffings to these things, is an essentially grotesque figure." No, it is not easy to grow old. There are the creeping infirmities of age, the impairment of the memory of names and faces, the sight growing dim, the hearing growing dull, and, saddest of all

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has pressed
In their bloom.
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

Notwithstanding, we all know people who have grown old gracefully. They have taught us that the autumn of life may be just as beautiful as life's springtime. To them music is as pure and high a pleasure as it ever was. The human voice in its accents of tenderness and affection is as grateful to the ear as in the days of youth. The beauty of the world has grown more wonderful each year. All the

wide ranges of human thought are as open and inviting as they ever were. The paths among their books in which their minds have loved to wander are still open and familiar. The great problems of world welfare have increased in significance and fascination with the passing hours. The eternal truths of God have been lifting themselves daily into clearer light. There has been a growing sense of the goodness of God in whom they have trusted and a deepening faith in the leadership of Christ whom they have followed. They make one think of the significant saying, that if the sun stood still at noon we should never see the larger illumination of its setting. They teach us to get interested in fadeless ideas, to set our souls on the success of immortal causes, to save ourselves from a sour old age by fastening our hope in youth and in middle life on the things that are eternal. From then we learn that

An old age, serene and bright
And lovely as a Lapland night,
May lead us to the grave.

And then we face the eternal future. The thought of death brings fear to the hearts of many. One correspondent writes: "I am filled with a strange fear at the thought of death, Christian though I profess to be. I have to force myself to attend the funerals of departing friends; in fact I often stay away when I know I should go. Death seems to me to be a curse from God. Is this fear natural or is it sinful?" Death is as natural as birth and just as essential to the carrying forward of the world. Our fear of death is

a natural passion. Like other passions, it is not to be uprooted but to be held in check. Were it not that the thought of death were repulsive to us, producing recoil in every healthy life, the world would scarcely remain peopled. The fear of death is the guard of life. If there were no fear of death, sheer curiosity or love of change, or dread of ennui would cause many a man to push open the closed door in order to see what is beyond. For a sick man death loses much of its terror, and that is a merciful providence. For a healthy man, death is terrible, and that is a wise providence.

I write not of trembling cowardice and paralysing tremour which blight all the bloom of life and darken the gladsome light, through which terror some go all their days in bondage. That is not reasonable in a man, not creditable in a Christian. It is due largely to the dense superstition into which men have fallen and so deeply dishonouring to the Heavenly Father—that superstition by which death is thought to be a curse. Our God does not curse. I see many people die and the act of death is not fearful. From the immortal sonnet on the *Fear of Death* by Sir Philip Sidney, I quote a few lines:

Since Nature's works be good, and death doth serve
As Nature's work, why should we fear to die?
Since fear is vain; but when it may preserve,
Why should we fear that which we cannot fly?
Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears,
Disarming human minds of native might.

In the dying speech of Socrates as reported by Plato, Socrates told his judges that in all the im-

portant events of his life he had been guided by a supernatural voice or sign which warned him when he was incurring danger. But in this case, he says, it did not warn him, did not turn him back from the course he was pursuing, wherefore he argues that death cannot be an evil but a good. Apart from the Christian revelation that is surely one of the noblest testimonies in all history to the intrinsic greatness of the human soul, a greatness which death can do nothing to destroy. Man believed in immortality long before Jesus was born. It is a mistake to suppose that Christ bestowed immortality upon men.

With the coming of Christ we get something quite different. Instead of the old shrinking from the menace of death, we now have a confident affirmation that the Master has overcome death and that a glorious destiny lies open to the believing soul. We learn that one of the things that most astonished the pagan contemporaries of the earliest Christian workers was the utter fearlessness of the latter in regard to death. They did not die like the Stoics nor even like Socrates, they died exultantly, smiling in the face of death and declaring death powerless to hurt them in any way. This was something new. The world had not heard that note before. Are we sure we understand it? The New Testament teaching about immortality is not what many seem to think. Its main emphasis is not on survival after death, going on with our personality unimpaired. It is upon the experience of a kind of life over which death has no power whatever because time has none either. I mean the life eternal, the changeless, abiding fulness which is the life that God lives and

which transcends all the vicissitudes and illusions of sense. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

It was the kind of life, not its duration, upon which they loved to dwell. That life, they maintained, was the only real life. It always had been and always would be. It was as stable and unalterable as God Himself—in fact, it was God Himself and nothing else. If we can get hold of the life eternal, if we can succeed in living it or living in it in any true fashion, however restricted in range, death can only come as a deliverer, a remover of fetters and inhibitions, an extender of consciousness into full participation in the blessedness of Christ. He that hath the Son hath the life. And of those who truly live for Him it can be affirmed that the great change when it comes will only be an entrance upon a fuller apprehension of a good that has long been enjoyed.

Joy, shipmate, joy!
(Pleas'd to my soul at death I cry)
Our life is closed, our life begins,
The long, long anchorage we leave,
The ship is clear at last, she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore,
Joy, shipmate, joy!

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